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PREFACE.

THE author's motive for publishing this series of Letters was partly to afford useful information respecting the Sclavonian countries, which are, in general, little known; but chiefly to remove some erroneous misconceptions which have arisen from partial and imperfect accounts. He has endeavoured to represent the state of things as known to him from records and his own observation; and in doing so, he has historically traced the revolutions of the Sclavonian character,—social—moral —religious—and literary, as these were manifested in different climates and ages.

Of that aboriginal nation, more extensive than any known upon the globe, the author has made the *Poles* the main ob-

ject of his consideration,—a people who, in the succession of ages, from the dawn of history to the final dissolution of their country, have followed a more regular and undisturbed march of their own, both in their political and intellectual developement,—who, during the exertion of their energies, the tendencies of which were manifold, have exhibited in their character national features of the most marked and prominent kind,—and "who," as an eminent writer has recently expressed it, "were long the only representatives of their race in the assembly of civilized nations."

The limited extent of this volume makes it obvious, that the author could only give an outline of his subject; but he thinks he has sufficiently brought into view the principal points on which the mind of the reader may rest, or from which further and deeper inquiries might be started. He has devoted more space to the literary part, because this province has as yet been left untouched in foreign writings, and, as constituting the moral life of a people,

may afford an explanation of many political phenomena and tendencies.

The author has written in a foreign language,—a circumstance, as it may well be conceived, greatly unfavourable to his task, and which makes him now throw the result of his literary attempt entirely on the liberal allowance of hospitable indulgence. In granting this, the benevolent readers will perform a fair act of return, —since, in submitting his Letters to the public, he was not actuated by the ambition of a literary fame, for which, writing in a foreign idiom, he could entertain no hope, but has, in some measure, lost sight of his own imperfections and of his own interests, in order only to promote a true knowledge of his country, and, if possible, to suggest some materials for new associations to those who, in future, may happen to direct their attention to the same object.

EDINBURGH,
10*th January* 1823.

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HINTS

FOR THE

PRONUNCIATION OF POLISH NAMES.

ALL the vowels are sounded as in French and Italian languages. In Polish there are properly no diphthongs, every vowel being pronounced either separately or conjointly, more or less audibly.

The consonants are pronounced in the same manner as in English, with the following exceptions:

w is sounded like v, WAWEL pronounce *Vavel.* PONIATOWSKI pronounce *Poniatovski;* PULAWY, *Pulavy.*

c like tz, never like k, as PAC and CECORA, pronounce *Patz, Tzetzora;* POTOCKI, *Pototzki.*

g like the English g in "big" and "Gibbon:" *e.g. Oginski.*

ch like the Greek χ, or the Scottish ch in "Loch;" as *Chreptowicz, Lech.*

cz like the English tch in "pitch," or ch in "which:" CZARTORYSKI and CHODKIEWICZ, pronounce *Tchartoryski, Chodkievitch.*

sz like the English sh in "shape:" WARSZAWA, *Varshava;* STASZYC, *Stashytz.*

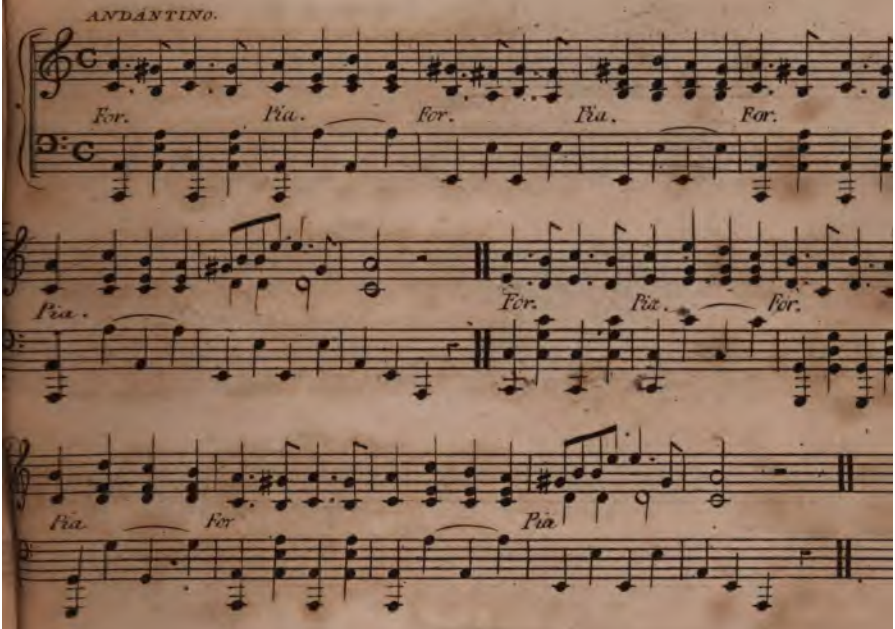
szcz like shtch: SZCZERBIEC pronounce *Shtcherbietz.*

rz like the French j, as in "je" and "jour," with a slightly audible sound of r; RZEWUSKI pronounce *Rjevuski;* SZCZEBRZESZYN, *Shtchebrjeshyn.*

These are the principal peculiarities of the Polish pronunciation. There are a few other of a subordinate kind, but depending on rules too intricate for explanation.
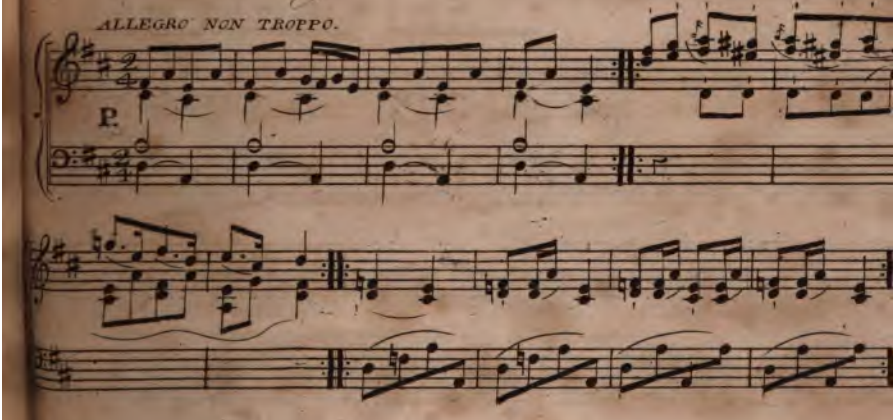
I

Ukrainian Duma.



II

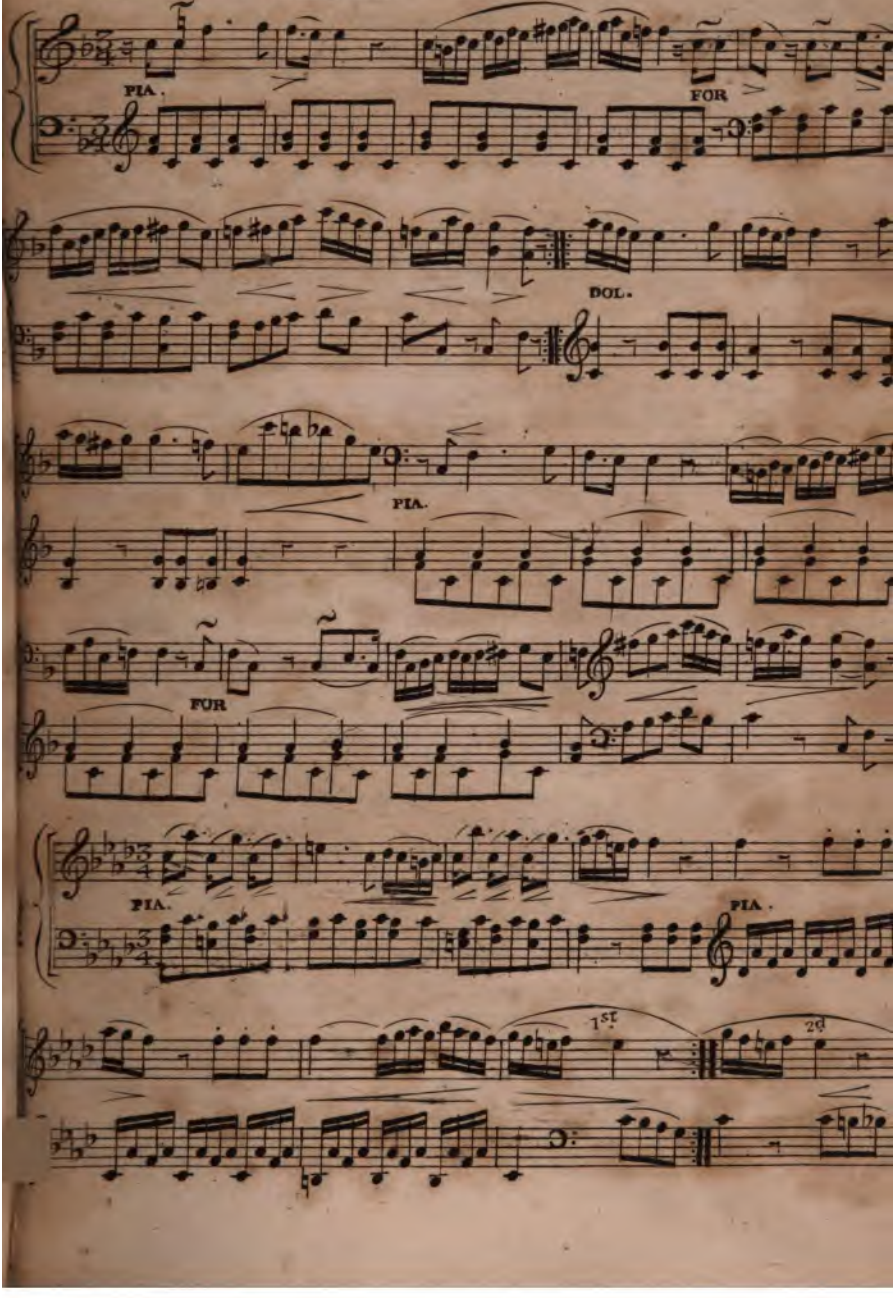
Cossack Dance.

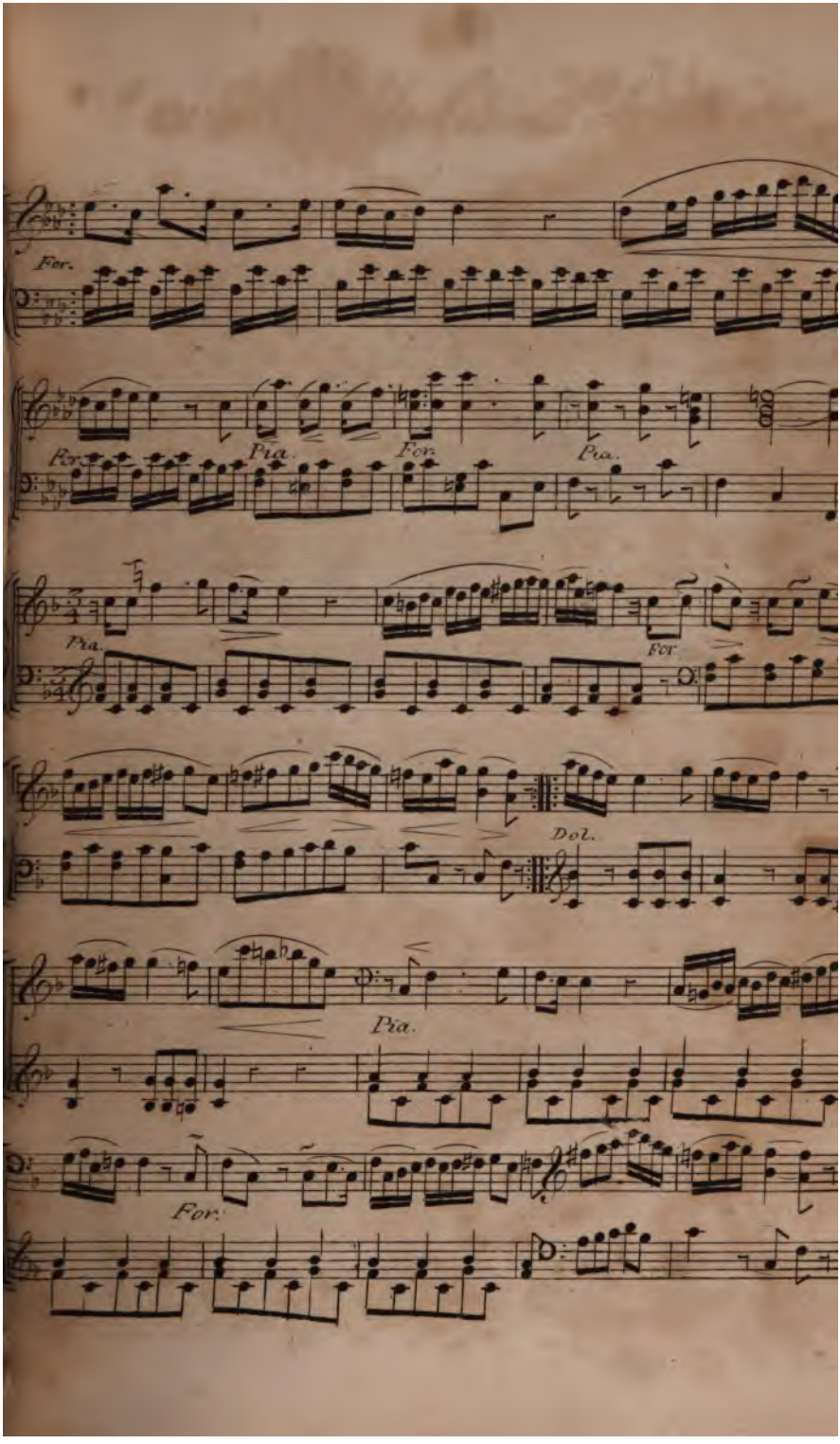


III

Count Oginski's Polonaise.

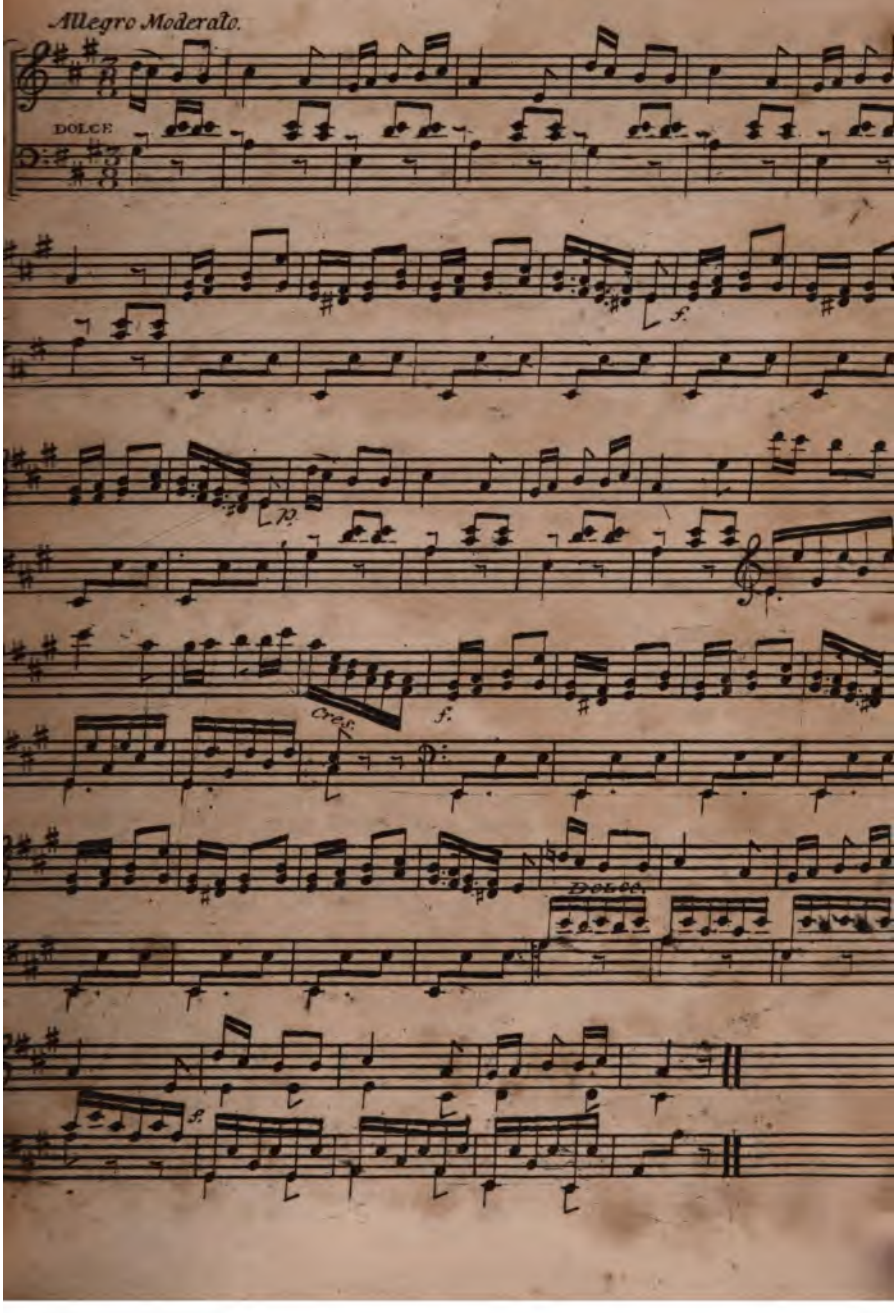
TEMPO DI MINUETTO MODERATO.




For.
For.
Pia.
For.
Pia.
Pia.
For.
Dol.
Pia.
For.

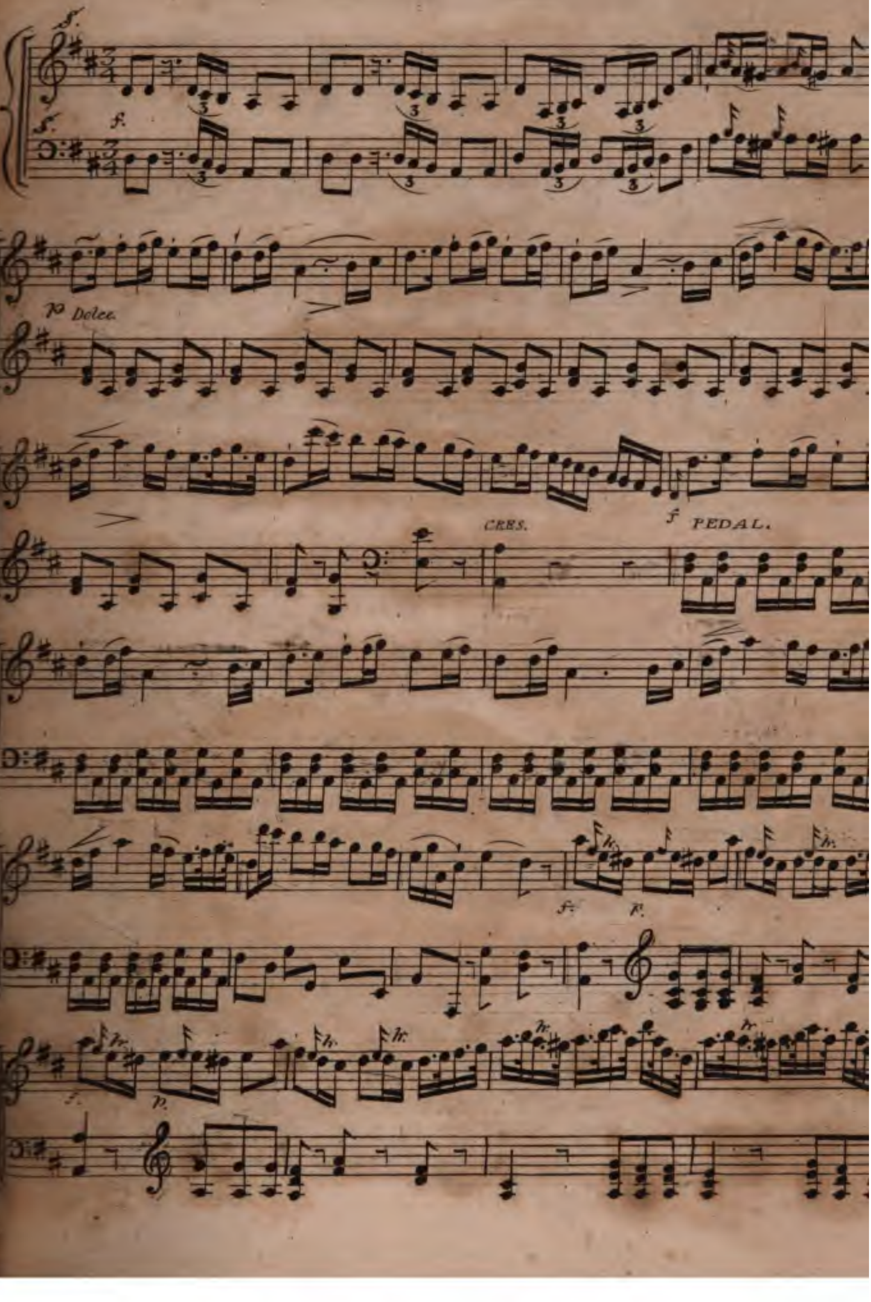
Mazurek

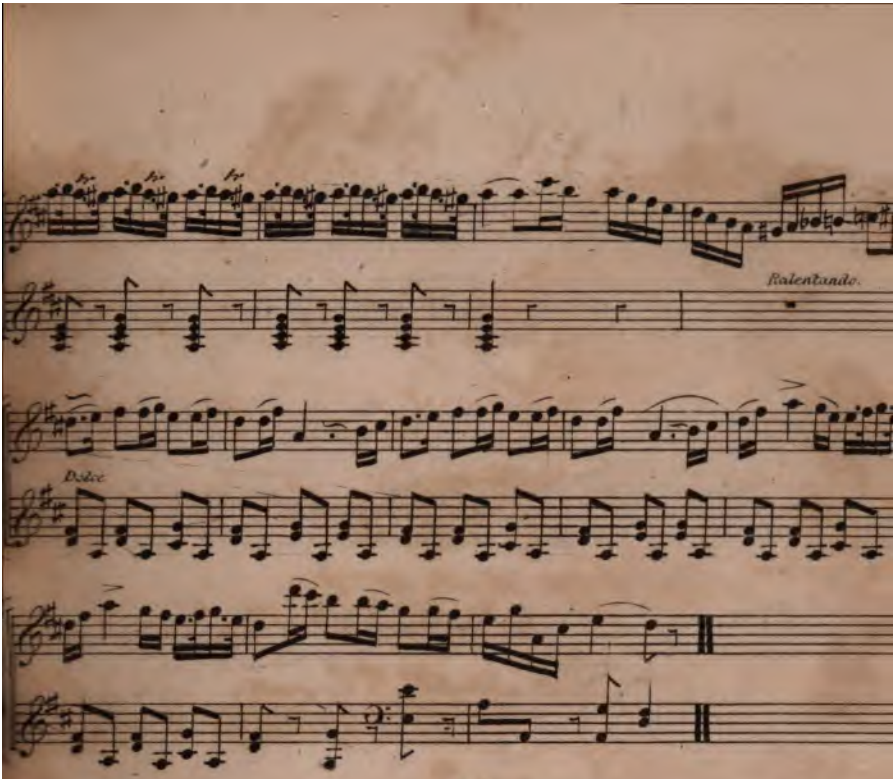
A Polish Dance.



V
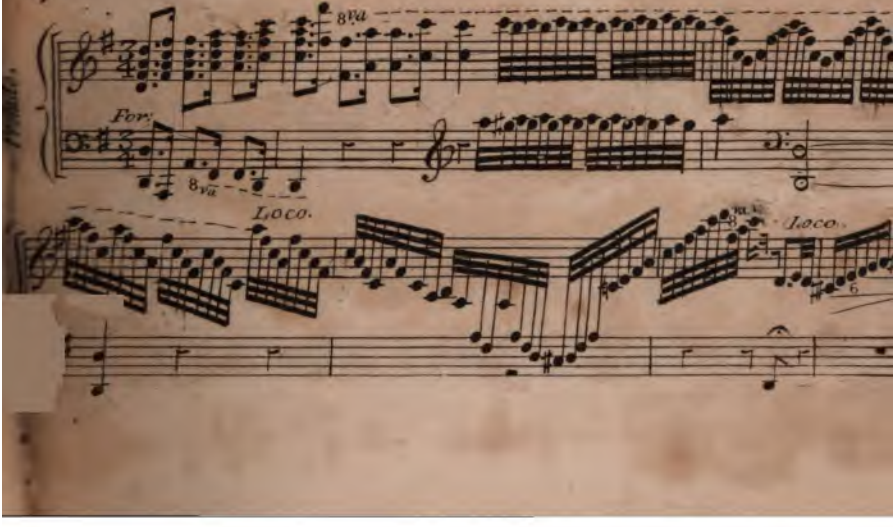
Maeser's Polonaise.

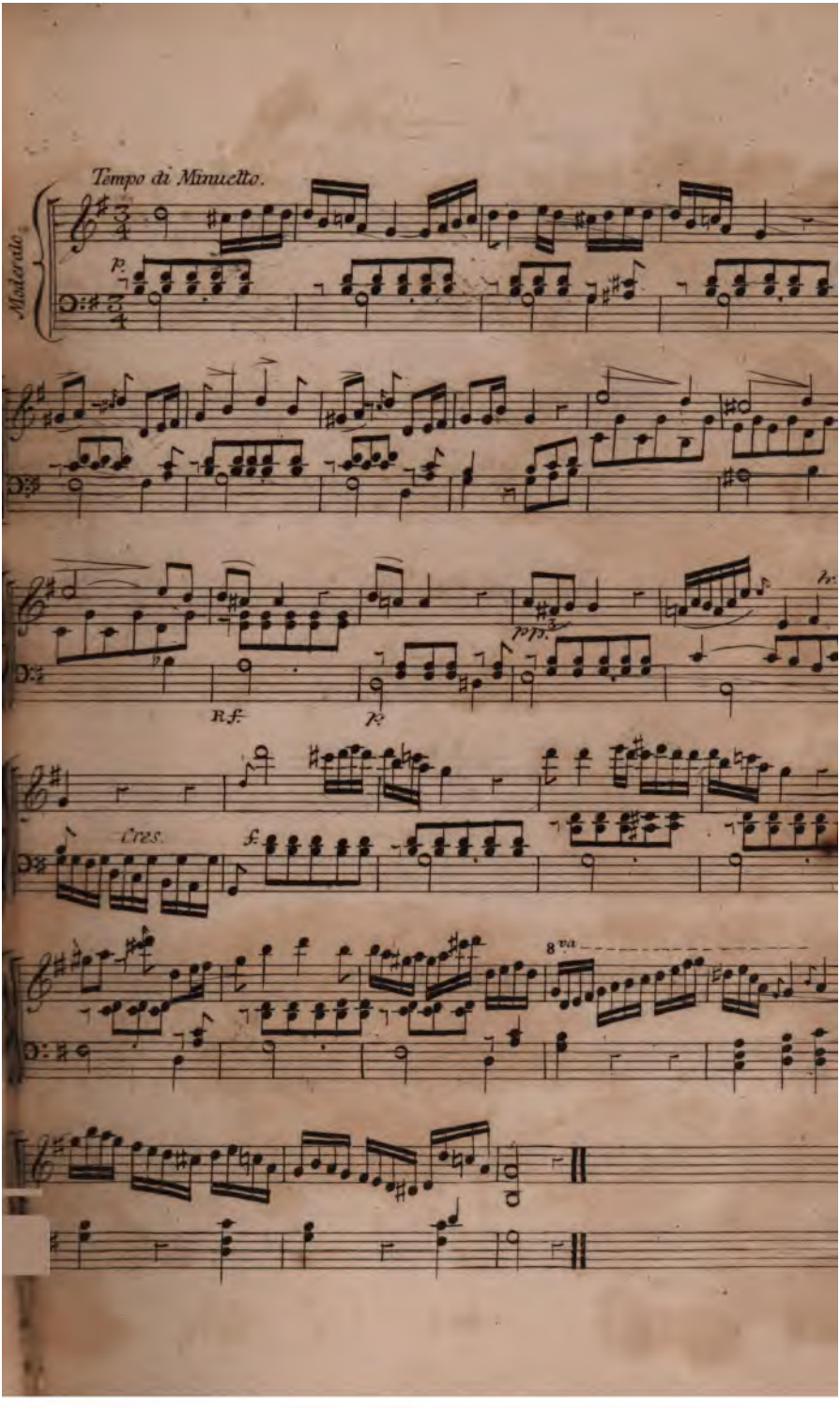




VI

Theme of Yanievicz's Divertimento polacca. *Monthly Rose N°9.*




Tempo di Minuetto.
Moderato
p.
Rf.
p
ppp.
Cres.
f.
8va

LETTERS ON POLAND, &c.

LETTER I.

Sclavonic Traditional Poetry—Bohemian Tale—Sclavonian Bards—Remnants of Heathen Customs—Songs, and their Collections — Resources of the Modern Poetry — General Outline of the Sclavonian Character.

DEAR SIR,

IN the conversation which I lately had the pleasure of enjoying with you on literary subjects, you wished to know if we had any traditional poetry. I replied in the affirmative;—for we really have it in abundance. I also stated, that the same remark applies beyond Poland to all other Sclavonian countries. But nothing was said of the character and genius of that poetry, but what might be expressed in these lines of yours—

Its smiles appear
More mournful far than many a tear.—
Voice most gentle, sad, and slow,
Whose happiest tones still breathe of woe,
As in the ancient Scottish airs,
Even joy the sound of sorrow wears.

I now send you a specimen of this poetry, which I have attempted to translate into English. The original is in the old Bohemo-Sclavonic dialect, and was discovered by Mr Hanke in the year 1817, in the tower of an old church, amidst a confused heap of ancient implements of war. The manuscript from which it was published, judging from its handwriting, must have been written between the years 1290 and 1310. This, at least, is the conjecture of Dobrowski, one of the first Bohemian literati. Along with it were found several other historical ballads of various kinds. The one which I give you is the oldest; it refers, as you will observe, to the ages anterior to the conversion of the Sclavonians to Christianity.

The tale is of the heroic kind. The scene of action seems to be in Bohemia or Moravia. The *wood* mentioned in it may be the famous Silva Hercynia, stretching through Germany and terminating in Bohemia. The *blue mountains* may be a range of the Carpathian, or, perhaps, the Giants' Mountains, where anciently lived a Sclavonian tribe, called, from the size and strength of their bodies, Obry or Giants. One of the two *holy rivers* may be either the Elbe or the Danube; and the *foes* with whom they had to fight were, perhaps, the Avari or Franks. Ludick, their leader, may be one of the generals of Charlemagne, or one of his successors, who, after having over-

awed the Saxons, attempted to follow up their conquests over the contiguous Sclavonian tribes.

The roughness of the translation has some claim to your indulgence. It might have been easier to render it free and elegant than tolerably literal; but an attempt at elegance would have exposed me to the risk of abandoning fidelity, which, in the translation of documents of such antiquity, is of far more importance than any external polish.

The general tenor of the tale has evidently much of the Ossianic cast; and, if Macpherson be a faithful interpreter of a genuine Ossian, the similarity betwixt ancient Celtic and ancient Sclavonic poetry will appear remarkably striking, in so much that we only want another Macpherson to boast of a Sclavonian Ossian. There have existed among the Sclavonians many bards, who are recorded "to have received from the gods the gift of song, and to have been beloved by them," and who were also held in veneration amongst men, upon whose deeds and feelings they conferred immortality. Some of their names are preserved by tradition, and transmitted along with their songs to after ages. In the subjoined tale you will read the names of Zaboy and Lumir, in others those of Ratibor and Bojan are signalized. Bojan was denominated the "nightingale of olden times;" and was held to be the grandchild of Wieles, tutelary

God of Flocks. He sung in Great Nowgorod; and a street in that town is, from his name, denominated Bojan's Street. The hero of his song was Mscislaw, son of a Duke Wladimir.* Of many other bards the poems alone are extant; while their own names are sunk into oblivion. Most of them shared the same fate with that of the rhapsodists anterior to Homer's æra.

But all that, in general, is known of these bards, called, in Sclavonic, *Piewcy*, (singers,) is, that they were held in great esteem, their persons being sacred and inviolable; that they performed religious rites; that, in cases of hostilities, they were the mediators among their own princes, and were em-

* The names of the ancient Sclavonian heroes are always significant; and, in their etymology, point to certain personal qualities, either in war or peace. Most of their names terminate in *slaw*, from slawa, fame, glory,—the acquisition of which seems to have been their principal aim. Mieczyslaw signifies glorious by the sword.—Wladislaw, glorious by power.—Wszeslaw, all-glorious.—Przemyslaw, famous by art or cunning, a sort of Sclavonian Ulysses. Others contain the syllable *mir*, signifying peace, as Wladimir, the mighty in peace.—Casimir, the violator of peace.—Skarbimir, the treasurer of peace. Female names express rather mental than bodily qualities. Lubawa, the lovely. Swiatoslawa, famous all over the world.—Zbignewa, the appeaser of anger. At a more recent period, these ancient personal appellations were supplanted by Christian names of no special meaning; in Poland, they were adopted from the Romish Church, in Russia, from the Greek.

ployed in embassies to foreign countries. History mentions two such Sclavonian minstrels as having been sent in that capacity from the shores of the Baltic to the Byzantine court. They are related to have come upon this errand from a peaceful people, which disliked hostility, and which was peculiarly fond of music and poetry. Other duties of these bards were to celebrate the princes and heroes of their country. They were their companions on journeys and warlike expeditions, and occupied an honourable place at their tables. The west of Europe had its *Round Table* celebrated for its romantic poetry: the east had also one of its own. This was at Kiow, at Duke Wladimir's court. You are in some measure acquainted with its poetry, by means of the German translation which I had the pleasure to communicate to you.

We find Sclavonian bards occasionally appearing in the train of foreign princes, their presence probably being in request on account of their skill and amenity in song. Attila, the barbarous king of the Huns, and the scourge of the world, after a battle in which he was victorious, ordered two bards into his presence. They sang to him in a foreign tongue, the Sclavonic. Praises of heroes, and feats of war performed in their own native land, were the subjects of their song. Whilst hearing their enchanting strains, the other chiefs melted into tears, nor did the iron heart of Attila

remain unmoved. With a gloomy cast of sadness in his look, he is said to have taken his son on his knee, and passed his callous hand over the tender cheeks of the infant, the future heir of his power and his glory.

These bards do not seem to have lived in any fixed abode, but went from tribe to tribe in the character of judges, mediators, priests, and instructors. Wherever they directed their course, they carried along with them a sort of musical harp, called *Gusla*. Their sonorous strains often rung in the villages scattered over the extensive plains—re-echoed amid the Carpathian mountains, and along the banks of the Vistula, the Elbe, the Wolga, and the Danube. The waters of the last river were, like those of the Ganges, praised as sacred, for what reason it is unknown. Toland, if his authority is to be trusted, asserts, in his History of the Druids, that the Celtic bards borrowed their harps from their Scythian fellow-minstrels: And the Scythians, according to historical researches, may, I think, be identified with the Sclavonians. No evidence at least has been brought forward to the contrary.

Time changing the face of things, at length effected a change in the Sclavonic poetry. The abolition of the democratical, or rather the patriarchal government, which once prevailed over all the Sclavonian countries,—the troubles which ensued

among the numerous petty princes,—the increase of their autocratic power over the people,—these, and many other circumstances, influencing the state of society, acted injuriously on poetry; for, having reduced man and all his interests to a fluctuating condition, and subjected him to the capricious disposal of an arbitrary power, they also oppressed the mind, the sentiments, and the imagination; and thus, introducing dismay and servility into human existence, spread universal darkness and mental incapacity. An interruption, or rather a dreary blank of mental exertions, ensued, which predominated for many centuries in the literary annals of that extensive nation.

The zeal of the Christian preachers completed what slavery had begun, and what, with all its heaviness, it could not by itself have effected. Apostolic eagerness could tolerate no song except their liturgy. The native and free effusions of the human heart they endeavoured to check and silence as impure and degrading to the lips of a Christian. But, in spite of the dreadful anathemas of the church, joy often broke asunder the fetters of fear, emboldened the neophytes to give freedom to their bosoms, and then human life often became an ecstasy of song. Hence in those places in which political and spiritual power has been least oppressive, the holy rites of ancient times may even now be seen; and the heathen

song, either pure and free, or mangled with Christian ideas, rings amid the peasantry, thrilling through their bosoms with mysterious power.

These phenomena chiefly appear on certain stated occasions, which the former existence of the nation seems to have hallowed for its festivals, and the destruction of which had not been effaced from memory, in like manner as there exist moments in human life which predominate above all others, and the remembrance of which is so lasting, that they appear, as it were, indissoluble from life's duration.

Thus, on St John's Night, at the summer solstice, you will see in all the Sclavonian countries, in some more numerous than others, large *fires* burning on the fields, or on the banks of rivers. This custom seems to point to the worship of the Sun, common to the eastern nations, and brought by the ancient Sclavonians to their present settlements. These bonfires are kindled with what is called a pure and holy fire, elicited by rubbing pieces of dry wood on one another. The youth dance around and leap over its blazing flames.* The

* A similar custom prevailed among the Celts. In some Druidical festivals bonfires were kindled on the cairns and other adjoining heights. These fires, consecrated by the Druids, were esteemed holy. The people used to drive their cattle through their smoke, in order to prevent the effects of ill luck, or witchcraft.

village maidens kindle at it their wax-tapers, which they send, entwined with floating wreathes of wild flowers, down the current of the streams. From the rapidity or slowness of their progress, they predict for themselves the speedier or later fulfilment of their wishes. On the same occasion, they are in the habit of singing old songs—some of them so antiquated, that their meaning has been lost in the progress of ages. But the very mysteriousness of the words heightens the relish which they reveal for their anxious bosoms.

Before the sunset of a fine autumn day, you will see a crowd of both sexes, old and young, approaching to the *White Hall*, (the dwelling of a landlord,) with solemn song and rural music. They are the reapers, and come to celebrate with joy the festival of harvest-home. At the head of this crowd proceed two virgins, the reigning beauties of the village—their heads crowned with wreathes of ears of corn—the one of wheat, the other of rye, both interwoven with a great variety of flowers. In front of the White Hall they offer to their landlord and landlady these symbols of the wealth of the fruitful soil, and pronounce a blessing appropriate to the occasion. To this act succeeds a national circle dance. The landlord leads the dance with one of the rustic Floras; the guests and peasants follow: and thus, in mirth and jollity, " true to their rural chieftain, heart

and hand," they drink, sing, and dance away the whole night—the starry blue heavens over their heads, the green turf under their feet,—

—— a crowd that might,
Transferred to canvas, give the world delight.

Some of the more ingenious in this Saturnalian company display their talent in composing extemporaneous stanzas, which they immediately sing to their known melodies; and it must be acknowledged, that many of their mirthful simple lines are not devoid of beauty, humour, and pungency. They often affectionately panegyrize their landlord, but are mostly taken up with ridiculing their fellow-peasants; nor does the monarch himself always escape their sportive attacks.

Sometimes, in the midnight darkness, you will espy the virgins stealing to the hallowed fountains. There you will, perchance, hear the plaintive music of an ancient song,

—— like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odours—

—chaunted in a low, whispering, tremulous voice, but yet too loud to be unheard through the elastic air of the dewy night. You will perceive the fair musicians holding converse with the murmuring waters, and sighing to them the secret wishes of their hearts—asking counsel, and then

returning consoled—believing that thus they have removed the dark veil of futurity.

Some old customs are established, which the reproving look of religion itself was not able to eradicate; and the clergy, however severe at first, were at length necessitated to yield to their intrusion, and admit them even to mingle with the ceremonies of the Christian faith. Of these customs, one still continues, that the wedded pair go to the church and return from it, accompanied with music and song. The songs bear an undeniable stamp of remote antiquity, apostrophizing often the moon and stars, with frequent repetitions of *Lada*, the Sclavonian Goddess of Love. The bride wears on her head a wreath of evergreen *wasilok* and *ruta*, and in songs is praised as a *queen*. The banners, floating in the gale, are carried before her, and, amidst shouts of joy, she proceeds with her bridegroom to the white hall, to embrace there the knees of the patriarchal landlord, and to receive from him blessing and presents.

Upon these and many other occasions the customs of former ages are revived; and, by association with the most important occurrences of life, they assume a sort of religious character. All such solemnities are, for the most part, accompanied by suitable ancient songs; a circumstance testifying that much traditional poetry must be circulating among our peasantry. Its spirit re-

cals to the mind the image of the social and religious life of the Sclavonians, and is mostly either amorous or heroic; its subject being love or glory—but the love and glory of times that are no more, and over whose tombs a mourning spirit strikes his magic string, sometimes bold, sometimes gentle, but generally in a slow and melancholy strain. This "*joy of grief*" is common to all nations, whose deeds, as well as existence, are of yore,—whose glory is a pleasing dream of the past,—and whose active life we do not see but upon the dead pages of history.

Several collections of the remains of ancient minstrelsy are in existence. The principal ones were compiled by Novikow, a Russian, and Stephanowicz, a Servian. Several years ago, Zorian Chodakowski, a Pole, began to make the Sclavonian antiquities the sole object of his laborious researches. His collection of ancient songs, and traditionary lore of every kind, will surpass any thing that has ever been done in this department, both for extent and for critical discernment. The Russian government assigned him a considerable annual allowance for continuing his travels through all the Sclavonian countries. Some months ago he was conducting his important researches among the mountains of Caucasus.

As yet, the richest and finest collections of songs have been made among the Sclavonian

tribes under the Turkish government. Their easy life, which is rather pastoral than agricultural, under a mild and temperate climate, disposes them for poetical pastimes; so that in poetry and music they rise much superior to all their northern brethren, whose habitations, the nearer they approach to the frozen regions, may be said to be the more closely wrapt in silence. The southern Sclavonians, having been kept constantly in a state of political isolation from the rest of Europe, were not influenced by foreign refined literature; their minds, therefore, unfolding themselves chiefly in an independent way, natural to themselves, pour forth treasures of ideas and feelings of their own. Some pieces of their poetry (which, flowing from so unalloyed a source, must, of course, bear an original stamp) are of exquisite beauty, and were valued, and thought worthy of being translated by such accomplished men as Herder, Goethe, and Brodzinski. Among their number the "Wife of Assan Aga" may undoubtedly be reckoned one of the finest specimens of elegiac traditional poetry. It is in the Morlaco-Sclavonic dialect, and has been translated into different European languages. *Libussa*, or the Princess's Table, a Bohemian tale, is translated into English in the Northern Antiquities. The Servians excel particularly in celebrating the deeds of arms. They have numerous war-

like songs in praise of their ancient princes and chiefs, down to the famous Czerny George. The southern Sclavonians are ardently attached to the popular form of government which they originally enjoyed, and no efforts made for restoring it were ever left unsung, or unrecorded by tradition.

If the many remains of ancient lore hitherto scattered in songs and oral traditions were collected, and embodied with accounts of the modern and ancient customs, and of the characteristical tendency of the Sclavonians, they would undoubtedly furnish a firm foundation for erecting a splendid structure of modern Sclavonic poetry. It is true, that the sources of these materials are not so concentrated as in Scotland; but this disadvantage is compensated by their variety and their unparalleled extension. We know not, indeed, where to find the limits of their wide range. They extend from the river Elbe and the Baltic to the mountains of Caucasus; and from the Adriatic to the remotest boundaries of Northern Asia. Over every part of this immense extent the Sclavonians are diffused in their countless tribes. What riches of ideas must pour forth from their intellectual, sensitive, and imaginative faculties,—from their civil and religious relations,—and from their different opinions, as they variously rise up in time and place! Incontestably a wealth that is amaz-

ing to a systematical observer, and more suited to the irregular ecstasies of an enthusiast or a high-minded poet.

To explore and adorn these extensive and rich, but hitherto little frequented, time-wasted regions of poetry, there is need of bards endowed with strong intuitive powers, and with a diversity of poetical talents. There should be born Sir Walter Scotts, to recall from beneath the mountain tombs, (Kurhany,*) overgrown with moss and weeds, the bold spirit of old Sclavonian chivalry; —other Burnses and other Ettrick Shepherds, to give us a new picture of agricultural and fairy-pastoral life,—and those also for whom, as for Wordsworth,

> The meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

However little the poetical sources of the Sclavonian countries are known, yet some of the most celebrated foreign poets have already chosen from them subjects for their muse. Lord Byron, for instance, in having made our Mazeppa the hero of one of his poems, has not in the least cramped his imagination; its wildness has rather been gratified by ranging over the boundless plains of Ukraine. Campbell, also, did not detract any of the charms

* See Appendix, Note 1.

from his " Pleasures of Hope," by breathing, in these pathetic words, a heart-rending sigh,—

> Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
> And Freedom shrieked as Kosciuszko fell.

—A sigh worthy to be fixed as an epitaph over the whole nation, which was at that time laid in the grave, with all its ancient greatness and glory —a sigh which, heard by a wanderer of the Vistula, on the banks of the Thames, or along the Forth, recalls to his mind all his " home-bred sympathies," and makes him shed tears over the immortal pages, as the generous bard did at the shrine of injured humanity.

I know that you take delight in considering man under different aspects, and tracing his moral being through the history of the manifold exertions of his mind and social relations;—I know that you take for your point of view a commanding station, from which you may easily mark the mysteries of his divine origin and destination; therefore, I hope that this description of the image of the great Sclavonian nation, however imperfectly executed, will not be unpleasing to you. A nation which has not as yet been made the subject of much attentive consideration, though so very extensive, and possessed of as many moral as physical resources,—which contains in itself an embryo for the fulfilment of its great moral and political designs;—a nation which had originally

a peculiar language, the Sclavonic,* its peculiar religion and mythology, the remnants of which outlived their general abolition;—a nation which was governed by its own *laws*, brought by its ancestors into its present settlements,†—from what region it is doubtful—perhaps from India—perhaps they are an abstract from the Zenda-Vesta, the language of which seems to be of a kindred nature with the Sclavonic;—a nation which, in the innumerable tribes of which it is composed, under different climes and governments, did not, in spite of foreign oppression and contempt, lose the prototype of its primitive character—which followed for so many centuries, and still follows, its own class of ideas and habits, and is peculiar in its so-

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* See Appendix, Note 2.

† Of these *Laws* mention is made in an ancient Bohemian song, preserved in the Museum at Prague. They are called "*Legislative Tablets*," "*Laws of the ever-living Gods*," "*Laws of the Holy Right*." These laws, and several other inexplicable peculiarities in the Sclavonian countries, may be traced to an Indian, or some other oriental origin. It is, at least, certain, that the Sclavonic language is akin to that of the Zenda-Vesta. This Mr Maiewski, in his Sanscrit Grammar, proves by comparisons made with the Polish idiom, and by quoting whole sentences from the Sanscrit, which, with the aid of a little reflection, every Pole can easily understand. The similarity is particularly striking in the denomination of the numeral terms from one up to a hundred, which are nearly the same, and are formed upon the same grammatical principles.

cial virtues—whose precepts of morality consist of paternal sayings, transmitted in tradition from fathers to posterity—whose primitive poetry is still extant in songs, adorned with the lights and shades of pastoral and agricultural life—whose music resembles the uniform plaintive wailings of orphan children, who, even in their sports, do not seem to forget that they revel over the tombs of their venerable sires;—a nation which, for long centuries, lived almost exclusively on the plentiful produce of its fruitful soil, or on its numerous flocks, considering them as the only honourable sources of wealth, and disdaining commerce and usury as sordid and degrading pursuits;—a nation, poor in worldly stores, but rich in kindness, and warm in hospitality—whose leading character is mildness, submission, and fidelity to its legitimate superiors—cordial love among the remotest family relations—high respect to the grey hairs of their patriarchal aged—a most fervent love of their country, and undaunted valour in defending its rights. Of this there are many instances worthy of remark, as eminent examples in the history of patriotism. Some, prodigal of life, gloriously defended their liberties, and inflicted deadly vengeance upon those who dared to encroach upon them. Others, being unable to restore freedom to their country, abandoned it for ever, and, as exiles in other parts of the world, sought hospitality and far off tombs; or enrolled

themselves under foreign banners—fought—bled —and, guided by glimpses of a deceitful hope, adorned their tombs, if not their temples, with glorious laurels.

Such is the spirit and fundamental character common to every people of Sclavonian extraction, both those who, enjoying a government of their own, have attained to great political power, and those who, dispersed over various climates, lead a precarious existence, subjected to foreign laws and domination. This similarity of character is accounted for by their common origin and their wide-spreading consanguinity. Their real nationality has, indeed, suffered much by the numerous adverse circumstances to which they have been subjected; but, should it ever be possible to unite all their scattered family members into one whole, concentrated within the circle of their own home, and gathered round their own tutelary hearth, they would, ere long, reassume their national character in all its primitive purity; and, by its salutary guidance, rise, in mildness and strength, to a superior height of moral dignity and power.

Such are a few of the short and desultory considerations relating to the Sclavonians, which the translation here inclosed has suggested. Should their perusal amuse one of your leisure hours, it will be a great gratification to me to have so far contributed to your satisfaction. I remain, &c.

ZABOY, SLAWOY, AND LUDECK.

A SCLAVONIAN TALE.

(Translated from the Bohemo-Sclavonic Dialect.)

AMIDST a dark wood appears a rock. On the rock, the valiant Zaboy. He looks around on all the lands beneath. Looking, he sighs and weeps with dove-like tender tears. Long does he sit there, and is deeply sad.

Up at once he starts, and like a stag springs down the rock. He runs through the wood, roaming over its long solitary wild. Then through all the country he speeds from man to man; from warrior to warrior. Few words, and secretly, he speaks to each; and having bowed in acknowledgment to the gods, he swiftly returns to his friends.

Thus passed the first day, thus the second. On the third night, as the moon arose, the warriors gathered to the dark wood. To greet them, Zaboy descends into the glen,—the deepest glen of the thickest forest. He took in his hand a sweet sounding lute, and thus sung:—

"Ye warriors of kindred hearts and sparkling eyes! I sing to you a sorrow-stirring song: it comes from my heart—from the bottom of my heart, the abode of bitterness.

"The father is gone to his fathers. Behind, in his paternal hall, he left his children and beloved wives. Dying, he told his mind to none, except to his eldest brother: 'Dear brother! thou may'st say to all, with a father's voice: To this spot a stranger will force his way, and overrun our native land. In foreign tongue he will command, as he in other parts hath done. He will compel you to work for him—you, your children, and your wives, from the rising till the setting sun. And no more than one spouse will you be suffered to have, all the onward way from the spring of life till the grave. All the hawks of your woods will they scare away; and to the gods of other countries will they force you to bow and sacrifice.' Ah, brethren! neither shall we then dare to strike our foreheads before our gods, nor to reach them food in those places where our father was wont to bring them offerings, and where he raised his prayers. They will cut down our woods, and break in pieces all our gods."

"Alas, dear Zaboy! from the heart comes thy song, and goes to the heart—to a heart drowned in bitterness. Like Lumir, minstrel of yore, who enraptured Wyszogrod, and all the lands around, so hast thou touched me, and all my brethren here. All good minstrels are beloved by the gods: from them thou hast thy song, to stir up our courage against the foe."

Zaboy threw a look on Slawoy's kindled eyes, and resumed his song:

"Two sons, whose voices to manly strength had grown, went often to the wood. There they practised their skill with the sword, the battle-axe, and the spear; there they hid their weapons; but when their arms and minds gained strength, they joyously resumed them to take the field against the foe. Following them were other gallant brethren, and together they confronted the foe. The battle was like a stormy heaven—but the bliss of former days returned to their home."

All at once they sprung into the dale toward Zaboy. Each one pressed him in his sinewy arms. Then, from breast to breast they passed their hands,* and exchanged their convening watch-words.

And the night drew towards dawn. They left the dale each in his lonely path. To the thickets they repaired on all sides of the wood. One day passed, then another; and whilst the night darkened on the third, Zaboy proceeds to the woods, and through the woods behind him follow hosts of warriors; each true to his chief; each with a heart too stubborn to yield to a foreign king; each armed with a sharp weapon.

"Now, Slawoy, dear brother! onward to yon

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* An ancient custom in plighting faith.

blue mountain's brow: its summit overlooks all the lands around. Onward, let us bend our steps from the hills towards the morning sun. There is a gloomy wood, where our hands may plight our faith. Go thou thither now with the steps of a fox; I shall follow thee behind."

"Ah, Zaboy! trusty brother!—Why is it that our swords must, from the top of the mountain, commence our dreary battles? Rather from this spot let us seek our foes, the slaves of kings!"

"Slawoy, dear brother! Wilt thou crush a viper? On its head put thy foot; and there is the head!"

Dispersed to the right and to the left, the warriors plunge through the forest. Here they draw up at the words of Zaboy, there at the words of Slawoy, their chiefs; and move, covered by the gloom of the trees, onward to the blue heights of the mountains. After three suns had passed, they stretched to each other their vigorous hands, and, with the look of the fox, beheld the warriors of the king.

"Ludeck, range thy warriors for battle. Ludeck, thou art slave above all slaves to the kings! Tell thou thy savage tyrant, that to us his orders are as smoke!"

And Ludeck kindled in wrath. Straight, with one call, he gathers his warriors. Broad light shines beneath the heavens. Each way the spears

of kingly power glitter bright in the sun-beams. Ready they are to go where Ludeck goes, and to strike where he commands.

"Now, Slawoy, dear brother! Haste thither with the steps of the fox. I shall go and strike them in the front."

And Zaboy struck in the front like hail; and Slawoy struck in the flank like hail.

"Alas, brother! these are they who have broken our gods; who have cut down our groves; who have scared away our hawks. The gods will give us victory."

And a front of numerous hosts, headed by Ludeck, rushes against Zaboy; and Zaboy, with flaming eyes, rushes against Ludeck: Like oak against oak, each is seen above the other trees of the wood.

Zaboy presses to Ludeck alone.—Ludeck strikes with a heavy sword, and cuts through the threefold fells of his shield. Zaboy strikes with an axe. Ludeck swiftly avoids the blow. Against a tree struck the force of the axe. The tree falls down on the warriors, and thirty of them go to their fathers.

Ludeck in wrath: "Thou baleful seed! Great monster among serpents! fight me with a sword."

Zaboy grasps the sword, and cuts off a corner from the shield of his foe. Ludeck, too, grasped his sword; but the sword slid along the iron

shield. Both kindle in fire to wound each other. Into fragments they hew all their armour, stained all around them with blood. With blood were sprinkled all the warriors, and all that was in that gory battle.

The sun passed the noon, and half-way from noon to the evening, and still they fought. Neither here nor there did any one yield; every where lasted Slawoy's deadly strife.

"O, thou foe! a fiend is within thee—Wherefore dost thou drink our blood?"

Zaboy grasped his axe, and Ludeck sprung back; he lifted the axe and threw it at his foe. The axe flies—to shivers breaks the shield, and beneath the shield the breast of Ludeck. His soul shrunk at the heavy blow. The axe chased the soul from the body, and flew five furlongs amidst the army. Terror forced a shrieking scream from the throats of the foe; joy rung from the mouths of Zaboy's warriors, and sparkled bright in their eyes.

"Now, dear brother! the gods have given us the victory. One band of yours may speed to the right, one to the left. Let them bring their coursers hither, hither from every dell." The horses neigh in all the woods. "Zaboy, trusty brother! thou art a lion without fear. Cease not from the bloody work."

And Zaboy threw aside his shield. In one

hand he takes an axe, in the other a sword, and wielding them from side to side, forward he cuts his way amidst the enemies. They shake with fear and quit the field. Terror forced shrieking screams from the throats of the foe. The horses neigh through all the woods.

"To horse! to horse! On horses pursue the foe! Through all the lands let us drive them out. Let us carry amongst them terror and destruction."

And fierce they sprung on their fiery steeds. Hard behind they press upon the foemen. Wound on wound they deal,—heap slaughter upon slaughter. The valleys, the hills, the woods, pass by—to the right and to the left—all fly behind.

Lo! there the holy river murmurs along. Wave towers behind wave. The warriors shout shrill, and closely press, step by step, on each other. Together they cross the foaming stream. Its waves had borne down many a stranger; but carried their friends in safety to the other bank.

The cruel kite spreads, far and wide, its long wings over the lands, and keenly darts on every bird: Thus the warriors of Zaboy, dispersed in bands, far and wide, chased the foe over all the country. Every where they killed, and crushed them beneath their horses' hoofs. In the night, under the moon, they hung on their rear: in the day, under the sun, they hung on their rear; and again, in the dark night, and after the night, in

the dawn of the day—they every where hung on their rear.

Lo! there again a holy river murmurs along. Wave towers behind wave. The warriors shout shrill, and closely press, step by step, on each other. Together they cross the foaming stream. Its waves had borne down many a stranger; but carried their friends in safety to the other bank.

"Go on! thither to the grey mountains. There will end our vengeance!—O, Zaboy! dear brother! behold the mountains; already they are not far distant. Few are our foes, and these implore our pity. Let us turn to yonder side, thou hither, I thither, to overthrow all that is kingly! The winds blow destruction through all the villages; through them all the armies bring desolation—through all the villages to the right and to the left. On, warriors, on! with broad strength, and with shout of joy."

"Dear brother! lo, there is the broad top of the mountain. The gods have given us this victory; and there many a soul lingers, hovering unsteady on the trees, a terror to the birds and timorous beasts; the owls alone fear them not. There, upon that summit, let us bury the dead, and give food to the pious. Thither let us bring rich offerings to the gods, who have again restored us to freedom. Let us sing to them pleasing words, and heap up the spoils of the conquered foe."

LETTER II.

Sclavonic Popular Poetry—Its Elements and Modifications —Ossian—Sclavonic Poetry illustrated by Examples—Mythology and Superstitions—Ancient Poetry as the resource of the Modern—Music.

DEAR SIR,

SEVERAL months ago I had the pleasure of sending you a letter, in which I attempted to lay down some general remarks on the traditional Sclavonic poetry; at the same time I subjoined a specimen of it in a translation. The specimen was an ancient tale of warlike theme. I selected it from a great many of the same description, as one particularly calculated to convey to you a faithful picture of the most ancient poetry, and of the military spirit of the primitive ages to which it referred.

I wish not to detain your attention any more upon these scenes of horror and desolation, painful even in fiction, where the human race is more injured than its wrongs are redressed, and the sensibility of the heart more hurt than delighted. I will rather direct your eyes to scenes where

Sclavonic poetry assumes a milder and lovelier character—where it is chaunted in simple and artless songs, and human feelings respond alternately in a joyful or melancholy strain, as often as pangs force the heart to burst its silent bounds, or joy raises its calm and serious countenance.

This sort of homely poetry I am inclined to distinguish rather by the name of *popular* than *traditional.* Traditional poetry is founded on the recollection of events which had really happened in a certain place, and at a certain time, and have been handed down to later ages by oral tradition. It seems, therefore, to partake somewhat of a historical character. Popular poetry, on the contrary, being a more generic designation, may, or may not, imply this idea of historical events. It consists of the mere effusions of the heart, couched in song, and preserves the same popular nature, whether of ancient or modern date. It is called popular, because it takes its birth, and is fostered in the bosom of one particular people. It is generally felt and understood, because its spirit flows from one common source, namely, the human heart, and is embodied in a current and intelligible language.

The standard for estimating the popularity of any poetry is, however, very uncertain; and it is not more easily fixed with precision than the popularity itself is easy of attainment. It might even be af-

firmed, that the erecting of a real monument of popular poetry is perhaps attended with more difficulties in execution, than the erecting of a national,—at least, so we may fairly conclude, on surveying all poetry upon record. Few of those who undertook the difficult task of becoming popular, have been successful; and, in general, nations can boast of more national than popular poetry. The cause of this circumstance, as I conceive, is to be found in the subject-matter of the two. Popular poetry excludes every thing foreign to its theme, both in matter and manner. It deals exclusively with universal feelings, expressive of the moral life of a particular people. Its field is thus limited, and it cannot overstep the boundaries of those, as it were, inborn habits, without becoming unpopular. National poetry, again, is not so strictly confined to what is peculiar to one single people, but may at pleasure enlarge its range, and admit subjects of foreign origin, by fashioning them to the ready apprehension of the reading public. It only requires a happy choice and incorporation of the materials, and they do not in any way prejudice the excellence of national performance, but are even fitted to add elevation and dignity, by affording it a more extensive poetical command. Milton's Paradise Lost, Butler's Hudibras, Wordsworth's Excursion, in each of which a great variety of extraneous know-

ledge is introduced, are not, on that account, less excellent monuments of English national poetry.

Agreeably to the general principles now stated, the most popular of all Scottish poets is undoubtedly Burns, and the most national, Sir Walter Scott. Lord Byron, who embodies in his poems the most extraneous elements, may, with reason, be called a universal poet, who, having little that is exclusively English, except the language, belongs to all countries and nations, and, in virtue of the quality of his works, is more read and more relished over all Europe than any other living poet.

In turning my attention to the Polish literature, I may reckon many in the class of national poets, Krasicki, Niemcewicz, Kropinski, Wenzyk, Woronicz. But those of the popular class, such as Burns and Ramsay in Scotland, and Bloomfield and Crabbe in England, are comparatively few. The whole amount of the popular Polish poetry might, indeed, be comprised in a few lyrical pieces of Kniaznin, Karpinski, and Brodzinski; not forgetting, however,

> ——Many a song of olden time,
> Of rude array and air sublime,
> Though long on time's dark whirlpool toss'd,
> The song is saved, the bard is lost.

In surveying the general fate of ancient popular poetry, it may with truth be asserted, that

it has survived in Scotland, in Ireland, and in the Sclavonian countries. In these lands alone it took firm hold of the memory of the common people, and is remembered with delight and enthusiasm. Among other European nations which could once boast of possessing it, we find it now entirely silenced and forgotten.

But this poetry of the Celtic and that of the Sclavonian race are in their nature widely different, although both spring from the same source—the sensibility of the human heart, which is common to all mankind. This difference is, I think, to be accounted for by the diversity of climates, and by differences in the natural situations of these respective countries. There is no doubt that Man stands in closer connection with the whole of nature than he is generally willing to allow, or is himself conscious. To all that is going on in the depths of his secret and unrevealed Self, he admits external objects as friends and associates. At the important moment, when passions or affections are aroused in his bosom, he, almost instinctively, addresses himself to the nearest objects, and makes them participate in his joy or his sorrow. In strong and violent emotions he casts himself on the bosom of surrounding nature, and tinges his own feelings with the hues in which she is clothed. In a state of mind more passive than active, he receives impressions from without, and

allows external objects to be reflected in the mirror of his soul, where they then become the plastic elements of his fancies and his reveries. According to the existing state of his mind, his expressions must vary their degree of strength, both with the intensity of his emotions, and with the qualities of surrounding objects.

Thus the deep and solitary glens amid your native mountains are, I think, the appropriate resorts of corroding grief. The mists and clouds that hang over the mountain-brow, overshadowing the valleys beneath, are apt to damp the spirit of joy, and deaden even its instinctive propensity to cheerfulness with depression and sadness. The mountain torrent, foaming in downfalls, makes the heart of the injured and prostrate soul feel, like it, resistless, and rise in strength and boldness. The same torrent, again stealing smoothly and silently along through level and enamelled meadows, might perhaps have composed the grieved mind to peace and resignation. Like an eagle from the mountain-top, the mountaineer rushes on his prey; whilst the inhabitant of a low country is of a meek and peaceful disposition—more disposed to endure than to resent—to submit than to subdue; because nature does not address herself to him in the language of boldness and energy, but in that of calm and gentleness, soothing his passions, and moderating his temper.

The moaning winds, at dead of night, filling the imagination with hosts of spirits, the moon looking pale through her watery halo, as if mourning over the souls which Ossian represents riding on the unwieldy masses of the clouds, the immensity of Ocean lifting its blue waves to the storm in endless perspective, are objects in themselves grand and sublime, and as such fitted to awaken the strongest emotions, lending their own gigantic features, elevating the affections of even a milder nature, and magnifying, as it were, the whole scale of feeling and expression.

After these brief statements, it is evident that the elements of popular poetry ought to be sought either in external nature modifying the mind, or in the mind as reflected from external objects. Various other causes might also exist to influence its spirit, such as particular forms of government, the prevalence of chivalry, and the events of the Reformation. But causes of this description are only incidental, prevailing for a time, and then disappearing like the fashion of a day. They may exist in one country and not in another; so chivalry did among the other nations of Europe, while among the Sclavonians it was unknown. Their poetry, therefore, was not, in any respect, influenced by its spirit, though their civil and military polity might, to a certain extent, have been so influenced, in consequence of the frequent in-

tercourse which some Sclavonian nations maintained with the rest of Europe. Nor did the Reformation, which was productive of so many changes in other quarters, effect so great a change in the public opinion of the Sclavonians. Its influence reached only to some of their countries, as Bohemia and Poland, and this only for a short period. The majority of their numerous tribes continued in a pacific and unreformed state. Accordingly, our popular poetry remained unadulterated by any addition conveyed to it from this channel. It blossomed freely under the genial influence of the country's climate and landscape, as the Celtic once did while it was the free inspiration of bards and minstrels, undepressed by any political revolutions which are apt to disturb the quiet progress of thought, and to interrupt the flow of feeling and natural associations.

It is thus from the nature of the surrounding scenery, that poetry receives, or as it were imbibes, certain colours, which constitute its particular character and national originality. And it is from no other cause, except this mysterious blending and union of the human soul with the external world, that the poems of Ossian have derived not only their superior beauty and harmonious effect, but also their characteristic peculiarities, indicating that their origin and their birth-place cannot possibly be any other known country except Ca-

ledonia. The peculiar spirit which breathes through them points distinctly to their native region, as the only land that could have given birth to such sort of poetry. Whatever disputes may arise respecting the authenticity of these poems, there can never be any as to their native country. Whatever criticism may pronounce concerning their antiquity, it cannot deny their excellence and beauty. There is a common feeling of what is charming and beautiful that pervades sensitive bosoms, which, when awakened, as it is by reading Ossian's Poems, bears stronger testimony in their favour, than all the doubts of antiquaries can avail against them. Guided by this feeling rather than by criticism, foreigners have learned to estimate all their charms. And there is no nation in Europe, of any literary fame, that has not several translations of them, rivalling one another in beauty. The greatest poets, as Shakespeare, Milton, and Tasso, have not so many translators as Ossian. The gloomy charms of his scenery appear to the Continental reader like a mournful Fairy-land—his pensive mood forms a new stock of ideas for contemplation, and affords impulses for feeling—his bold imagination opens a wild field for the range of fancy. It is owing to the high opinion conceived of them that Old Albyn's Harp, with the Scandinavian Edda, and the Northern Sagas, gave, as is generally thought, a

peculiar turn to the Continental poetry, made it deviate from its customary classic path by imparting to it a spirit of gloom, and a tendency to sentimental reveries, of which the German poetry of these days in particular, bears the strongest characters.

After this, every foreigner must wonder at the want of enthusiasm which he finds in Great Britain for Ossian. The high opinion he entertained of him he is unwilling to part with; is grieved more at the illusion destroyed than delighted with the detection of the truth, and still is willing to concur in that *apotheosis* with which a foreigner has honoured him, calling Homer the *sun;* Ossian the *moon;* and Shakespeare a *star*, (or perhaps a comet;) a triumviral partition of the heavens somewhat enthusiastically fancied, though, I think, not unaptly representing the distinctive characters of these great geniuses. I may here refer to the sentiment of an ingenious modern critic on the same subject, the truth of which, I think, is more forcibly and more generally felt on the Continent than in this Island. " If it were indeed possible," says Mr Hazlitt, " to show that this writer (Ossian) was nothing, it would only be another blank made in existence—another void left in the heart —another confirmation of that feeling which made him so often repeat, 'Roll on, ye dark-brown years, ye bring no joy on your wing to Ossian.' "

If such, then, be the influence of external nature in modifying the character of poetry in so many instances, what should really be the features distinguishing the Sclavonic poetry? What the prevailing spirit of the poet? What the hue of his sentiments and language? And if the inward mind, camelion-like, takes the colour from the objects which nature has drawn around it,—what peculiarities are we to look for as characterizing his poetry? He has no ocean rolling in majesty before his eyes, but he has silent lakes, with a silvery expanse, either mirrored before him, like the peaceful ease of his untroubled life, or occasionally ruffled with passing whirlwinds, like its misfortunes, which discompose the serenity of his countenance, but do not utterly discomfit him. His country is almost without mountains:—he has, therefore, no precipitous cliffs—no gloomy glens —no sheltered covers; but before him lay boundless plains moving with the harvest crops, and interchanged with meadows of balmy flowers—immense woods darkening the verge of his spacious horizon—vast majestic rivers—a serene, unclouded azure sky expanded over his head, and imparting to his soul an infinity of thoughts and feelings. In these, and such other ways, he may hold converse with Nature and her mysterious workings. Her elements become the element of his poetry. Her mild features give mildness to his thoughts

and gentleness to his expressions. His poetry, therefore, is not, and cannot possibly be, *sublime*, it can only be *beautiful*, like the elements in the midst of which it is produced. Strong affections and passions, aroused violently in his bosom, may, indeed, raise him at times to a loftier flight, and impart to it a moral and intellectual energy; but still these manifestations are to him like unusual excitements, and the real character of his poetry can only depend upon graces which belong properly to a less turbulent and less impassioned soul.

But, instead of running the risk of tiring you longer with metaphysics, permit me, in illustration of what I have now stated, to adduce some fragments, or rather desultory ideas, of this poetry, by way of example. I give them in an abridged form, just as they occur to my recollection; and I leave to you to judge in what way the connection between the mind and external nature had taken place.

A Sclavonian youth, dying on the field of battle, calls to the *wind*—makes it his messenger to his father, his mother, and sister—bids it tell them, that their son and brother is asleep "beneath the green turf," and shall return no more. He then takes an affectionate farewell of his *steed*, and expresses great concern about "who will henceforth reach him his food when hungry, and water when thirsty!"

A Bosnian chief has gone abroad to war. His lady sits solitary in her chamber, and longs for tidings. But who brings her tidings? The ominous "black ravens" which hover at her window, and which she fears to address—and, when addressed, they answer her, that they came from the field of battle—had picked out the eyes of her beloved husband, and feasted on the corpses of his slain army.

A Sclavonian maiden, like another Dijanira, asks the rising sun to tell her news of her lover.

A lover approaching to his love is "a pale moon gliding on to a *bright star*."

A young woman unfortunately married—far from her friends and home—sorrowful and desponding—saunters in a lonely wood—approaches one tree after another—leans towards one, embraces another—she calls them by the tender names of father, mother, brother. At last, finding no relief, she bitterly exclaims, "Alas! these are no father, no mother, no brother!"

Now, from all this, it appears to be a fixed and constant principle, that joy and grief are only communicative when moderate in degree; but as soon as they reach a high pitch of intensity they do not then stoop for the sympathy of human bosoms; but shelter themselves amidst the silent solitudes of inanimate nature, there to ruminate undisturbed on the fevered feelings of the mind. I allow my-

self now to introduce this remark, as this lonely and solitary spirit pervades all the Sclavonic popular poetry, and particularly when grief becomes its subject. Innumerable instances might be adduced, when strong emotions and *passions* overpower the soul. In such moments, *affections* seem to walk along, either in moral dignity or in moral turpitude, through the solitudes of nature, transforming, in their progress, the real aspects of objects. Is there a rivulet, they call it a river—does a breeze arise, they call it a storm—is there a retired shelter, they call it a wild desert. Great themselves, and aggrandizing every thing, they stride along, clad either in joy or in sorrow. Each step they take is gigantic; and wherever they turn, are, like the Æschylian Prometheus, followed by *Power* and *Strength*.

Besides these few specimens of Sclavonic poetical ideas, quoted in the form of short abstracts, but which, perhaps, have not sufficiently striking features to render them totally distinct from all other poetry, I shall now give you some instances which I have literally translated, and which bear strong marks of their Sclavonic origin.

Of an affectionate wife, mourning the absence of her husband, it is said: "Her tears fall like *dew* upon the *flowers*, (her cheeks:) Her *bright sun* (husband) will rise and dry up the *dew*."

The following of a shepherd is in the highest

degree picturesque. It will remind you of the scene of Romeo and Juliet; and might, at any rate, not be unworthy of Shakespeare. "Lean thee, my love, on my arm. I will gaze on thy bosom till the dawn will awake thee."

The following bears the character of an old adage: "The strong wall of a palace is the people, its golden top is the monarch."

But the descriptions of warlike events are, above all, picturesque and forcible. They partake even somewhat of the oriental style. A Sclavonian chief, after victory, is celebrated in these words: "Upon that day there were two *suns*. One in Heaven, which rolled on; one on earth, which stood still—and long years shone over all the land."

Of the same warrior the bard goes on to say: "His understanding was like a palace. With his understanding he entangled his enemies like little birds in a net."

In the following passage you will see a bold portraiture of the Sclavonian landscape: "But now misfortunes arose, and a flock of black ravens (enemies) rushed on. Winds shot their arrowy blasts on Russia's holy land. The waters of the rivers turned muddy: a pillar of dust swept over the fields. The banners flapped high on the gale. He (the chief) arose in all his strength: summoned the courage of his heart. He burned with the

thirst of battle. 'To horse, my fellow soldiers! to horse, ye gallant heroes! Let us ride to the feast, where we shall drink the wine of blood—ye, who were swaddled amid the din of clarions, and cradled in helmets.'—'We will follow thee,' they cried, 'thou bright sun of our country. With our oars we will dash aside the waves of the Wolga, and drain up the Don with our helmets.'"

The last passage which I shall quote contains such a bold and original description as is rarely to be met with: "The chief rushed onward against the foe like a dark cloud that rolls towards the sea. Like a wolf he ran through the open fields—like a fox through the dark woods—like a falcon he darted across the rapid streams. In the foaming vapour of his war-horse the sun and the moon stood eclipsed. No beam of the bright world was to be seen."

But besides the influence of outward objects, there are other elements which enter into the essence of all popular poetry, and bear a share in determining its peculiar character. Such elements, I think, are to be found in the moral constitution of every people, and may also be discovered amid our Sclavonian ancestors, who, during the course of successive centuries, struggling from darkness to light, were subjected to the delusions of various superstitions as if to various moral

diseases. These errors, acting on their minds with all the force of truth, often assumed over them the authority of ruling principles: By regulating their consciences and actions, they must also have exercised a strong influence on their poetry. Of the changes which such superstitions are fitted to produce every one may be fully convinced from the poetry of Greece and Rome, in which they constitute not only the ground-work, but also the loftiest part of the superstructure. The poetry of these two nations cannot even be comprehended unless their mythology is understood. This mutual relation and bond of union is so strong between them, that, about a century ago, it gave occasion to the strange questions among the learned in France, Whether the origin of poetry be in mythology, or that of mythology in poetry? And, as modern poetry was considered to be remarkably inferior to the classic, Whether poetry without mythology can exist at all? But the last question can now admit of no farther doubt. It has been solved by various poetical works which have since been produced, and which are acknowledged to be excellent, although mythology has not in the least contributed to their excellence. Human race, which, during its infancy, was for the most part guided by imagination in poetry, which made its features so bold and gigantic, is now guided by intellect and deep feel-

ing, which both became the foundation of the modern poetry, and constitute its principal charms. Mythology was at last superseded in the European literature by allegory, which was a sort of substitute for mythology; but its reign was of short duration. Its naked and impalpable abstractions—boneless and undefined moral fictions—were unable to take hold of the mind, or to awaken the sympathy of the heart. Scandinavian mythology was of an equally transient duration. Some German poets attempted to introduce it into their poetry, but it was only relished as a patriotic dream. It consisted of an assemblage of uncouth superstitions, which did not secure it a durable reception in this enlightened age. The Gods of Walhalla were too rude to be associated with the refined conceptions of their earthly worshippers. These idols were soon forgotten, and remain now a mere *nomen et umbra.*

Now the Sclavonians had also, like other nations of an original stock, their own mythology. Their minds, philosophizing on the mysteries of nature, were necessitated to create beings, to whom they referred all unknown and secret causes as to higher sources and superior agents. Their imagination invested these with various bodily forms, which often were fantastic and extravagant, but always symbolical of the abstract properties by which they were severally distinguished.

The first and the highest deity to whom the Sclavonians bowed in adoration and fear, and whose anger they appeased with victims, was the Thunderer *Piorun*, (Jupiter Tonans.) Two places appropriated to his worship are recorded in history. One was near Heiligenbeil in East Prussia, where he had a sacred grove. A constant fire was kept up where his image stood; and the oak under which it was placed is recorded to have been ever-green. The other place of his adoration was at Wilna. The hearth where victims were burnt to him is called *Zglisko*. It is shown to the curious in the Cathedral under the High Altar, where some remainder of ashes are still extant. The *God* of *War* and *Peace* was worshipped under the shape of a sword. The *White God* was the giver of happiness; the *Black*, the author of misfortune. *Zywie* was Goddess of Life and of Produce. *Morana*, Goddess of Death and of Harvest; a beautiful moral allegory, uniting at once the symbolical idea of Ceres and Proserpine. *Klimba*, the Goddess of Prophecy and of Fortune. *Lada*, the Goddess of Love. *Poswist*, the God of Winds. *Pagoda*, the Goddess of Fine Weather. They had also a God of Hospitality, *Radogost*, the only one who was worshipped in a covered temple, called *Gontina*. Other deities were worshipped in dark groves, in open fields, or on the summits of high mountains. Their reli-

gious rites are now entirely forgotten; and their names scarcely known by tradition. Lada, the Goddess of Love, has alone survived in the memory of our peasantry, along with the tender and unperishing feeling which she was supposed to kindle in human bosoms. On wedding-days her name is still chaunted in the ancient love-songs; but the original meaning of the word Lada is no more understood.

Still there exist traces of some mythological fictions, which, until this day, have not discontinued to exert a strong power over the minds of the lower classes, and which the most celebrated authors, even foreigners of the first renown, have not despised to employ as the theme and subject whereon to display their own powers of intellect and imagination. These phantoms of fiction are preserved in popular songs and tradition. History overlooked them, as unworthy of its proud pages. Of such matters songs are the best records. They embrace the collective image of the spiritual and moral existence of a nation; in short, they are, as Herder has well expressed it, "the soul of the people." Let me advert to some of them.

A Sclavonian conjures from the mysterious recesses of his soul such fancied beings as *Dola* and *Tuha*, (Destiny and Sorrow,) who, not unlike the Nemeses, come to seat themselves by the side of an unfortunate—remind him of his past mis-

deeds, and torment him in his sorrow. They are females; and, to sharpen his remorse, they never approach him singly, but commonly three together, like the Æschylian three-shaped Moiras, and Erynnes, Goddesses of Retribution and Punishment. A Sclavonian fancies himself still surrounded with a fairy world of his own, peopled either with innocent beings, such as his *Vilas*, a kind of nymphs inhabiting the mountains, and dispersing the gathered clouds,—somewhat resembling the Scottish brownies and kelpies, and believed to be of a harmless and cheerful disposition; or he calls up the hideous and malignant phantoms known by the name of *Wilkolacs*, (vampires,) who are supposed to be the bodies of the dead risen from their graves at midnight to haunt the habitations of the living, and to drain the fountain of life, by sucking out their blood;*—or he brings before

* Such a phantom is described in a very energetic manner by Lord Byron, in the Giaour. The imprecations of Moslem upon the Christian conqueror could never have been more dreadfully pronounced:

"But first, on earth as vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race,
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse;

his sickly imagination the *Maras*, who, by a strange coincidence, bear the same name and meaning with your Night-Mares, and in the same way are held to molest those who sleep,—a coincidence which seems to imply a common origin.

Nor do the apprehensions of his soul, tinged with superstition, stop here. An incapacity to perceive the connection betwixt causes and effects, even now leads the people to ascribe all unexpected events to the power of witchcraft or supernatural agency. His villages are therefore inhabited by witches without number, doing numberless acts of mischief. By their mysterious spells they are believed to bring mishap and disease upon him, or to distribute antidotes for averting calamity. Some have the power of blighting the cattle with distempers, and making children sick by the charming of their evil eye. Others initiate maids in the secrets of fascinating the youth, and predict to them their future fortunes. In these and such like ways, they exert their power of incantation, to de-

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Wet with thine own best blood shall drip,
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave,
Go—and with Gouls and Afrits rave.

The same has furnished the idea of a phantastic drama called *The Vampire*, which has been repeatedly acted with success on the British stage.

rive advantage by imposing upon the credulous. They are believed to compose sometimes a secret conclave with one another on *Mount Bald*; whither they journey through the air on wooden shovels and broomsticks amidst storm and whirlwinds. Thursday evenings are the most dreaded for apparitions of spirits.

During the middle-ages superstition and credulity possessed so strong a hold of the minds of the people as to cause them entertain an implacable aversion to every thing like science, and to all individuals who were engaged in cultivating it. All knowledge, especially in the physical sciences, was supposed to be the offspring of the Black Art, and the immediate gift of the Evil Spirit. One person in Poland became particularly obnoxious to the populace on this point. Till now-a-days he is recorded in tradition to have made a Contract with the Devil, in like manner as many in Europe were held to have done. He was a nobleman: and, as such, in making the compact, would by no means submit to sign it with his blood, which was the ordinary way, alleging his detestation of having any thing in common with plebeians. Instead of any written document he would only consent to give his *verbum nobile*, which he considered as security both the most honourable to him, and the surest to Hell,—and which accordingly was accepted. Having bound

himself by his *word* of honour to the fiend, he immediately wished to see the Pope; and the first service required from Hell was to open for him the straightest and shortest road to Rome, and that, while he hurried on his journey, the devils should fell woods before him—build bridges—and level mountains. The name of this proud and curious wight was Twardowski—his place of habitation Wengrow, a small town in Poland, where an iron-chest of his and a magic mirror are still preserved. He studied the physical sciences and alchemy, and seems to claim a kindred alliance with Goethe's Dr Faustus, and Lord Byron's Manfred. Thus, at certain ages, a contagious link of errors appears to have pervaded all countries, manifesting itself every where under the respective national colours.

From these few instances, which might be farther augmented, it is obvious, that such objects might furnish rich materials as well as machinery for poetry, and spare a creative genius the labour of invention. And since such phantoms, fictions, and superstitions, have their origin no less properly in the human soul than its most natural affections, passions, and desires, so they admit of being again wedded together; and of becoming legitimate subjects of new original compositions, clothed in all the charms and graces of poetry; where the human soul might manifest itself in all

the variety of its affections and its sufferings—the intellect in all the extent of its powers—and the imagination in all its fantastic brilliancy.

Various specimens of the poetry thus originated are extant among their traditional poetry. Their remnants, though rude and not always attractive, contain, nevertheless, valuable hints, examples, and impulses to the national poet. The simple and artless chaunt of a Servian shepherd may awaken in his breast feelings of innocence, and harmonize his inspiration to the praise of an Arcadian life and happiness. The loftier and more solemn theme of a Morlachian Improvisatore may enlarge his mind, and embolden his imagination to break forth into a majestic epic song. The tender, cheerful, and lovely stanzas of a sprightly Cracovian youth may teach him, in his pleasing pastime, to extol the charms of her who is lovely and dear to his heart. The simple and mournful ditties (dumy) sung by the Cossacs in the Ukraine, which, like the historical Scottish ballads, record the glorious exploits, but unhappy destinies, of the ancient leaders of their nomade tribes, may furnish him with materials for drawing a diversified picture of manners of the patriarchal life, and of the strong uncontrolled passions which are only to be met with in a rude and primeval state of human society.

From this rich and instructive field of popular

poetry I have made some gleanings which I here inclose. They may, I hope, be not altogether unworthy of your notice, if not from their intrinsic value, at least from their novelty and characteristic peculiarity. I give you one in blank verse, the other in rhyme, and the third in a faithful line for line translation. I preferred giving you the last in this state, in order to preserve its original tenor and simplicity, which any attempt to express it in measure and rhyme would probably have destroyed. The Russian Dirge may be found inserted in Mr Bowring's Specimens, from which I take it on account of its remote antiquity. The repetitions of words and ideas which occur in it are common to all ancient Sclavonic poetry.

Before concluding, let me remind you of the Sclavonic music, which is no less original than the Italian and the Scottish music. Even foreigners do justice to its magic power, by often adopting it in accompaniments to songs in their own language. The same airs and the same dances which are national favourites on the banks of the Wolga, the Niemen, and the Vistula, a traveller may occasionally hear played, sung, or spoken of with admiration in Germany, France, and Scotland. In what manner they came to be dispersed over these countries, it would be difficult to decide, and of no use when decided. Social intercourse procured them an introduction, and their

own charms a hospitable reception. Music, like sculpture and painting, has a most universal language, by means of which it addresses itself intelligibly to men of all nations and all countries. It needs no translation, like poetry and other literary compositions; it has an instantaneous, unimpeded, and all-embracing range; or, to use your own words, (if I recollect them rightly,) "Music spreads every where, like the air, and encircles the world with harmony." If it be so, I think our globe could not have chosen to be girdled with a zone more charming.*

A RUSSIAN DIRGE.

A young maid sat upon the streamlet's side,
And thought most tearfully on her bitter fate—
Her bitter fate, and on departed time—
Departed time—the glad, exulting time;
And there the lovely maiden robed herself;
She robed herself, with many adornings robed,
And waited anxious for her trusted friend—
Waited for her trusted friend:—a ruffian he!
He played the ruffian with the maid, and fled:—
Alas! love's flower of hope is withered!

Well may that lovely flower decay and die!
She calls in vain—she wipes her tears away:
Thee, rapid streamlet! they may fill, and roll
Over thy bosom—make thy bed of tears:
"I had adorned me for that faithless friend,
That faithless friend is fled:—He has stolen all—

* See Appendix. The Music.

All my possessions but my grief,—that grief
He left in mercy, if that grief can kill.
Come, Death! I veil me in thy shadows dim—
To thee I fly, as once I flew to him!"

THE NIGHTINGALE.

A SERVIAN SONG.

SWEETLY sung the Nightingale
Within the leafy bower,
Waving on the tender bough—
'Twas May, at evening hour.

There three hunters hear her song,
While they through the forest rove;—
With their bows they aim to kill
The sweet songstress of the grove.

"Beseech you! stop and spare me now,
Take me home along with ye—
I shall sing you sweetest songs,
Sitting on the linden-tree."

The hunters took her gently up
From the verdant hazel spray,
To their garden brought her home,
There to sing their maid her lay.

But the Nightingale was mute,
Sadly sitting on the tree;
And the fair maid pitying her,
Fain would set her captive free.

Straight the youths obey'd her will,
Took the bird with them along:
And the woods re-echo'd soon
With this sweet and tender song:

" Deeply sighs the lover true,
When divided from his love:
Deeply sighs the Nightingale,
Taken from her native grove."

ZBICHON.

A BOHEMIAN TALE.

YONDER a snowy white Dove
From tree to tree is flying;
In the gloom of the shady wood,
His notes of sorrow wailing.

" O my verdant, lovely grove!
Thou wert once a happy place,
When with my tender mate
I lived a life of bliss!
But Zbichon no pity knew,
He snatched her from my side:
And now in yon stony castle,
A captive sits my love!"

A youth also is wandering
Around the stony castle:
Sleepless day and night—
Day and night lamenting;
Now leans he on a rock,
And bitter tears is shedding:
Now leans he on a tree,
And his woe is weeping:
Now amid a lonely grove,
In sadness he is sitting.

To the place where he sat
The white Dove came flying.

"What aileth thee, my Dove?
Thy look betokens woe!
Why do thy notes awake the grove?
'Re-echoing sad and slow!
Hath a vulture from thy side
Snatched away thy lovely bride?"

"O stony-hearted Zbichon!
In the stony Castle:
No pity hadst thou on me!
Thou hast caught her on yon tree—
Brought her to thy stony Castle—
An easy prey to thy hand,
The mother on her nest—
From the side of her young!"

"Thou wouldst fight for thy love—
For thy true love wouldst fight;
If thy strength could withstand
But the might of the spoiler!
Were thy strength only equal
To the strength of the vulture:
Had thy feet but strong talons—
And the talons were sharp;
The vulture would, in gore,
Lie gasping at thy feet!"

"But thou, gentle youth!
Thy breast, it is manly,—
Thou mayst challenge the foe,
And confront him in fight.
To obtain thy redress,
Thou hast courage and strength;—
An axe and a sword—
Punish the spoiler!"

The youth, anon, with speed,
Hurries through the dark grove,—
The axe on his arm,
The sword at his side—
Forward to the Castle!

Through the thickets he rushes—
And at the stony Castle
He at midnight arrives:
And at its folding gate
With hasty hand he beats.

"A hunter, who lost his way,
Asketh hospitality!"

The folding gate was open'd,
But an entrance was denied.

"Where is Zbichon, the ruffian rude?"

"In his chamber he's asleep—
By his couch a maiden fair,—
Sad and sorrowful she sits—
Her raven tresses loosened,
On her snowy breast are streaming."

Quick, beneath the axe's stroke,
Down fell the Castle gate:
Next, beneath the faulchion's stroke,
Down fell Zbichon's head.
His menials were scattered,
And fled for their lives.—
The youth till the dawn
Remained with his love—
Till from the eastern sky—
From behind the mountains,

Came the rosy Dawn,
To the stony Castle
To welcome the youth!

And he gazed on his love,—
She was free—his love,
Whom, but yesterday, he bewailed
Captive in the stony Castle.

" Wherefore is the Dove
In that cage lamenting?"

" She was Zbichon's prey,
Like myself, a captive."

Now she, too, is free,—
Flies from tree to tree,
In the shady grove—
Is cheerful and free—
The Dove with the Dove,
They coo on one tree.

The maid, also, is glad,—
She is cheerful and free.
The youth and his love
Live a life of bliss,—
At the morn, at the eve,
In each other are blest.

LETTER III.

Modern Literature of the Sclavonian Tribes—Introduction of Christianity, and its Influence—General View of the Literature in Illyria, Moravia, Bohemia, Russia, and Poland—Obstacles to the Civilization of the Sclavonian Tribes—Their Tendency to Mutual Union.

DEAR SIR,

IN the two foregoing letters, I have shortly traced the character of the traditional and popular poetry of the Sclavonians; and, I trust, the sketch, though slight, will be sufficient to give you at least a general idea of the nature of that poetry, and the elements of which it is composed. The literary career of every nation has begun with traditional poetry; that poetry, therefore, ought to be considered as the embryo and presage of the future literary fame of every people. The few remarks I have given you on the primitive and aboriginal literature of the Sclavonians, may be regarded as an introduction to their modern literature. I have thought it the more necessary to premise these observations, as there are even now existing a great many Sclavonian tribes, whose li-

terature has never risen to any eminence, except in their traditions and songs; and the whole amount of whose modern literature has been confined to translations of the Bible and their Church Liturgy. Accordingly, they have no reputation in science; circumstances had hindered them from acquiring it. But it would be unjust to deprive them of the poetical honours to which they are fully entitled by their traditional and popular poetry.

The tribes now alluded to are the numerous Sclavonians scattered over Germany, Hungary, and Turkey. These may be said to have had only the advantage of protection from the respective governments under which they lived, but enjoyed no encouragement in literature. But, notwithstanding this, they have for centuries preserved their aboriginality in language, usages, and character. They resemble the Gaelic people in the Highlands of Scotland, who have, in like manner, preserved their Celtic language, their songs, and their superstitions. As I know you will feel some interest in becoming acquainted with these Sclavonian tribes, I shall mention to you at least the names of some of them.

Almost in the very heart of Germany, and in the midst of the Germans, in Lusatia and Pomerania, live the Vendens and Kassubians. In Austria are the Carinthians, Craïnians, and Carniols.

In Hungary, the Slovaks, more numerous than the natives. In Turkey, the Servians, Bosnians, and Morlachians. All these tribes stand low in the scale of civilization, and must continue so, until some fortunate circumstance bring them into contact with the great body of enlightened Sclavonians. They may then advance, by this approximation, to a better condition, both moral and political.

The nations which form the main body of the Sclavonian people, and which, besides a traditional, possess also a scientific literature, are the Poles, Russians, Bohemians, and Moravians, particularly the two first. Ages have been gradually rearing up the stores of their wisdom and knowledge, and have accumulated or diminished them according to the fluctuation of political events.

The modern Sclavonic literature begins with the introduction of Christianity. This last event was gradually accomplished in the course of about three centuries, namely, betwixt the eighth and eleventh. What the old religion of the Sclavonians might have been, is but little known. The apostles of the new faith zealously destroyed all traces of it, and in this they were assisted by the hand of time. It seems, however, that at the period when Christianity was first propagated in these countries, the Heathen creed had no great hold upon the minds of the Sclavonians; for the

Christian doctrine met with little resistance in its progress; no persecution was raised against its converts, and no martyrs bled for it. It gradually gained ground amongst them step by step in a peaceable manner. Hospitality, which is a prominent virtue of the Sclavonic nations, was the medium by which the new religion was conveyed to them. They received occasionally Christian strangers at their firesides, and, listening to their doctrines, they soon became proselytes. The Sclavonian princes, again, accepted the new faith chiefly by intermarriages with Christian princesses. Thus, mutual love promoted the religion of love. No sword carried the tidings of peace among the Sclavonians; a mild persuasion united them in the universal bonds of brotherhood and charity.

The light of Christianity entered the Sclavonian countries from two directions; from Rome and from Constantinople; and from both nearly at the same time. This circumstance divided the Sclavonians into two persuasions: namely, that of the Roman, and that of the Greek Church, which, though differing in form, were substantially the same. This division still subsists amongst them:—the Western Sclavonians adhere to the Roman, the Eastern to the Greek Church.

In the southern parts of Sclavonia the seeds of Christianity were first sown. The Moravians were the first of the more extensive Sclavonian

tribes, amongst whom the new faith was introduced; then succeeded the Bohemians, and, shortly after, the Poles. The marriage of Mieczislaw with the Moravian Princess Dombrowka, in the year 964, led to the conversion of the prince and his Polish subjects. In like manner, the marriage of a Lithuanian Duke Jagello with the Polish Princess Jadwiga, occasioned the introduction of Christianity into Lithuania. Of all European nations, this country was the latest in its conversion, not having received the Christian religion till near the end of the fourteenth century. In Russia, Christianity was established towards the end of the tenth century, under the reign of Wladimir the Great, Duke of Kiow. It may, however, have reached the more northern parts at a period somewhat later.

In considering the various effects which Christianity has produced upon the Sclavonian countries, it may be observed, that, in point of fact, the Roman Church has been more favourable than the Greek to the progress of civilization. Wherever it obtained a footing, science, arts, and liberal principles, began to flourish. It gave rise to a body of laws, on which the happiness of society was firmly consolidated, and weighed the rights of monarchs and their people in an equitable balance. This characteristic spirit of the Roman Church prevailed in Moravia, Bohemia,

Silesia, and most of all in Poland. The countries, again, where the Greek Church was established enjoyed no such advantage: the features of that church were more oriental than those of the Roman. In its constitution, there was more of showy pageantry than of any thing substantial —more that spoke to the senses than to the mind. It had the ritual, but not the spirit, of the Christian religion. The custom of preaching, so conducive to the propagating of morality, which is usual in the Roman Catholic Church, and which constitutes the principal part of the Protestant worship, was, in the Greek Church, entirely unknown. The whole devotion of its followers consisted, in private, of the ceremonies of bowing and crossing, and a strict observance of Lent; and their worship in church consisted only of the ringing of bells, and kneeling to the images of the Saints; points of little consequence to morality. The clergy were ignorant, and knew nothing either of Greek learning or of the arts. They did not study the Greek language as the Roman clergy did the Latin, and, of course, they could not derive from it that improvement which the Roman clergy derived from Latin literature. They lived in seclusion from the civilized world; and kept also their people secluded from the treasures of civilization. All that the nation received from the Greeks was the advantage of the Greek alphabet, which they adopted, as

other nations adopted the Roman; but even this was rather a disadvantage, for neither did they know the alphabetic characters of other nations, nor did other nations know theirs; and thus they were shut out from general communications. The Russians themselves have felt this inconvenience, and have even made attempts to adopt the Roman letters, which are common to the rest of Europe.

There is one thing, however, in which the Sclavonic followers of both churches have been defective; and that is, in the liberal arts of painting and statuary. Neither among the Roman nor the Greek proselytes did these arts ever flourish, although it cannot be denied that both persuasions, by admitting the worship of images, might have been equally favourable to their progress. In the very first ages, subsequent to the introduction of Christianity, some Greek artists, as we are informed in history, propagated painting among the Russians. The churches in Kiow were adorned with their works; but the infant art did not then take root in this country. Its monuments, however, still survive in the sacred paintings of Christ, the Virgin, and St Nicholas, the patron of Russia; but they are so coarse and tasteless, that the term *Bohomazy*, which signifies "paintings of the gods," has become a bye-word for the worst daubs and scratchings of the art. The followers of the Roman Church became acquaint-

ed, at a later period, with the fascinations of this art, mostly during their travels in Italy, where they had opportunities of seeing the masterpieces of the Italian school. Some purchases that had been made of the sacred paintings which were found there, and which were afterwards exhibited in the National Churches, as representing the objects of their adoration, contributed to diffuse the first faint glimmering of a taste for painting. In several of the old churches in Poland, some valuable works by native painters are still in existence, —executed, perhaps, in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. In that country there were some Italian masters resident, such as Dolabella and Baciarelli: Yet the æra of this art has been rather of modern date.

Neither statuary nor architecture have made advances amongst the Sclavonians: nor does there seem the least hope that these arts will ever make any considerable progress among them. The Sclavonians, inhabiting for the most part a level country, have no Carrara marble on which to exercise their skill, and but few stone quarries out of which to erect any splendid buildings. St Peter's, in Rome, and St Sophia's, on Mount Athos, were to them objects of admiration. But the models on which both were constructed could not be imitated on the same stupendous scale, for want of the necessary materials.

From these few observations, it will appear what advantages Christianity brought to the Sclavonian countries. Still, however, they did not operate everywhere in equal degree. The followers of the Church of Rome have derived their civilization from two sources—their religion, and the liberality of their monarchs. But the converts of the Greek Church have not reaped the advantages which usually accrue from religion: most of their countries still remain in a primitive state of rudeness; Russia alone struggles to emerge. The little civilization which that country has even yet attained has not been owing to her religion, but entirely to the impulses given to the active energies of the people by the wisdom of some of their enlightened Czars, and more particularly the present Emperor. Under his reign Russia has made greater advances in science and arts than she had made since the time of Rurick, the founder of the empire. After the progress which this country has already made towards civilization, her further advancement is well assured, as it seems to depend solely on the national energy which the people shall display in future, of which she gives now the fairest promises.

Thus much may be said in respect to the general influence of Christianity on the Sclavonians. Let us now remark how it has influenced each of the tribes separately—what are the literary re-

mains of each—and of what description these remains are. Each people followed its own peculiar path towards civilization.

Illyria, from its vicinity to the Christian Greeks, if not the first Sclavonian country where the gospel was preached, is at least that which can produce the oldest document of the Christian faith: that is, a translation of the Bible made in 865, by the two Illyrian apostles St Cyrillus and St Methodius. This country, in consequence of its political dependence, continued afterwards in a state of intellectual torpor, and can show no other records of its literature that are worthy of notice. We may, therefore, pass on, leaving also the other Sclavonian tribes, which, except their Homilies, Catechisms, and Prayer Books, possess no sort of literary productions.

Next to Illyria, we find, in the annals of history, Moravia and Bohemia converted to Christianity. Both of these had been for some time in a state of independence; and during this period they displayed their energies in literary pursuits. Yet scarcely any of the works which they have produced outpass the sphere of theology, chronicles, and books of heraldry. The vicinity of Germany has deprived them of their political existence; and the superiority of the German literature has diverted them from the cultivation of their own—insomuch, that they may be said

to have now no literature at all. The Moravians were divested of their nationality earlier than the Bohemians. They became sooner dependent on the Germans than the latter: and, as they were inferior also in literary accomplishments, so were they inferior in strength of character, and, of course, less able to resist any foreign powers opposed to them.

The Bohemians possessed a greater energy of national character. In the middle ages Bohemia held an important rank among the kingdoms of Europe. It had a celebrated University in Prague, where several learned men of great distinction shone in the republic of letters. The Christian religion itself has found some powerful supporters among the Bohemians, who strove both to propagate and to reform it. In the tenth century Bohemia gave birth to St Adalbertus, who became archbishop in Gniesno, and suffered martyrdom at the hands of the heathen Prussians, whom he was zealously attempting to convert. It also gave birth to Hieronymus of Prague, and to John Huss who, a century before Luther, had been struck with the abuses of the church, and attempted to reform them. He fell a victim to the superiority of his intellect.

These historical facts, and the works written in former ages by learned Bohemians, speak highly in favour both of the University of Prague, and of

the civilization of the whole country. The modern Bohemians cannot look back to their ancient glory with indifference; they struggle to revive it, by cherishing their national literature. It cannot, however, be said, that they cultivate it from taste, for their taste is rather German, but from what is perhaps more laudable, patriotic affection and enthusiasm. For some time, a periodical journal, political and literary, has been published at Vienna, and also one at Prague, the ancient capital. In the latter city, besides the German, there is a national stage, which, as I have been informed, is supported not by professional actors, but by amateurs. Still the Bohemians are, upon the whole, too much Germanized, that their literature should ever evince any strong national features. Their learned men, in their writings, prefer the German tongue to their own, not excepting Dobrowski, the first literary character in Bohemia. The living authors of note, who write their native language, are Zdzirad Polack, and Jungman, both poets. The present Bohemian literature consists chiefly of translations from the German, and imitations of German works, and only occasionally exhibits the genuine character of the national Sclavonic.

At present, I would rather direct your attention to a wider and more attractive field. I am about to consider the literature of the two principal Scla-

vonian countries, that of Poland, and that of Russia. These two nations, which originally occupied an extensive territory, extended its boundaries by conquest, and were both too powerful in their political condition not to be favoured by this very circumstance in the developement of a national literature. They were not, like the other Sclavonians, liable to be overrun by their neighbours, but occupied a secure position amidst the countries that surrounded them. They were, sometimes, indeed, exposed to foreign inroads, and even overwhelmed, but they could never be utterly subdued. The oppression which they endured was not lasting; they soon shook off the yoke which had been imposed on them. In short, by the force of a strong national character, they were invincible.

It appears from history, that it had been their custom to defy foreign aggressors. Like the Scythians, who had formerly possessed the same countries, and were probably their ancestors, they seem to have maintained this principle in war, "You may pursue us, but you shall not violate, with impunity, the tombs of our ancestors." The annals of all foreign nations which had ever dared to attack any of these people are written in characters of blood. The Tartar barbarians, having laid waste with fire and sword the Polish provinces, found their graves at Lignitz, (in 1241.)

The Turkish hordes sent by Bajazet (in 1498) from Asia and Africa, and who threatened to overrun Christendom, met their fatal day by frost and famine at the sources of the Dneister. In 1709, the whole Swedish army under Charles XII. was destroyed in the morasses of Pultawa. In our times, the whole tract of land from Moscow to the river Elbe, the remotest boundary of the Sclavonian settlements, and beyond these, has been fattened with the blood of those who had the boldness to assail the altars of the domestic gods of Sclavonia; and the children now play with the weather-beaten unburied bones of those foreign invaders, a sight shocking to humanity, and a warning to posterity!

The whole of the Sclavonic race is actuated by a peculiar spirit common to them all; and in this consists their principal strength, which it is difficult to resist, and impossible to subdue. It is upon this granite foundation of the national character that Poland formerly, and Russia since, have increased in strength, and that the latter gathers now under her dominion all the kindred tribes. The same national character which thus promotes the political interests of the Sclavonians is also the groundwork of their literature. In this consist the strength and the charm of their literature, and the only pledge and promise of its success.

Russia is yet far from possessing a literature

equal to her political importance. The inhabitants of her extensive domains laboured for a long time under very unfavourable circumstances, which were adverse to the progress of their civilization and literature. That country was originally divided into numerous small principalities, subject to so many absolute petty princes, who were more busied in dispossessing, killing, and putting out the eyes of one another, than in giving encouragement and protection to the arts and sciences. Afterwards Russia was overrun by the Tartars; and, for two whole centuries, groaned under their iron sceptre. Such rulers as the Tartar Khans had nothing to impart to their conquered subjects, except the savage Asiatic barbarity which seems to have been the common inheritance of this tribe. At last, by the efforts of their warlike Czar, Iwan Wasilewicz, they were delivered from the Tartars; but their minds still remained depressed, and needed time and peace to expand their powers. Under the reign of the house of Romanow, Russia emerged from the chaos of internal broils, and began to present a more settled aspect. Her importance in Europe, however, is of recent date. She has arisen to it very rapidly, in the course of a single century. To Peter the Great, Catharine II. and Alexander, the Russians have been indebted for their whole political and literary glory. Yet, notwithstanding the encouragement

given to learning, civilization does not yet proceed so rapidly as it would have done in other countries, under the assistance of the same benevolent institutions. The extreme thinness of the population hinders what may be called the *frottement des idées*, which is of so great avail in every populous country. It is, however, to be hoped, that the increasing population of Russia will now accelerate her civilization.

The ancient Russian literature is barren and unattractive. It consists chiefly of some remnants of old charters granted by different princes to towns, churches, and monasteries. These may be of some value as materials for a history of Russia, and the Russians are now sedulously occupied in collecting them. The oldest and most valuable remnant of their ancient literature is Nestor's History of Russia, which has been lately edited by the learned Schloetzer. Nestor was a monk in Kiow, and lived not long after the introduction of Christianity. To this may be added several chronicles, called by the Russians *Letopisy*, also the Church Liturgy, and translations from some parts of holy writ. Before Peter the Great, no sort of learning was cultivated or even dreamed of. The Greek and Latin language, both of which have been the sources of so much knowledge among other nations, were almost unknown.

Their modern literature began with the found-

ing of academies and universities, and at the time when their school establishments were placed on a similar footing with those of other European nations. Some of their present universities may vie with the other universities of Europe, in the celebrity of their learned men. Of late, great progress has been made in the mathematical and physical sciences, particularly in medicine.

Their polite literature is of a modern character. It is, however, rather imitative than original, the common fate of all literature which has been long retarded, as the people must then contemplate foreign models superior to their own, and be guided by them. No nation in Europe is more completely in this situation than the Russians; and, therefore, no nation possesses so many translations from foreign languages. Foreign languages are more studied among them than among any other people; it may even be said, that they constitute the principal branch of education in Russia. The professors in their universities have been mostly foreigners, German and French. It is only of late that some of the chairs have been filled by natives, who commonly acquire the necessary accomplishments in foreign countries, in the course of their travels, towards which the government affords them the requisite means and encouragement. The universities of Russia, as well as those of Poland, are supplied with a year-

ly fund for the purpose of sending abroad some of the ablest students. As yet, every thing is only in its commencement, but in a sure way to make mighty advances.

The native authors who have done honour to the literature of their country are still but few in number, and have appeared chiefly within the last seventy or eighty years. The most eminent are Lomonossow, Derzavin, Bogdanowicz, Karamzin, and Zukowski.

Lomonossow is called the father of Russian poetry, or the Russian Pindar, and Derzavin, the Russian Klopstock. The first is, perhaps, with more propriety, surnamed Pindar, than the last Klopstock. His ode to God, though sublime and admirable, known by heart by every person in Russia, and translated into Tartar, Chinese, and Japanese, does not yet entitle him to a comparison with the author of the Messiah, the rival of Milton, if not his equal. Yet he is indisputably a poet of uncommon lyric fire, and lofty energy.

Bogdanowicz is called the Anacreon of Russia, an epithet which does not convey a just idea of this author's literary genius. All that is Anacreontic in him is his simplicity of style. But his thoughts and subjects have nothing in common with the buoyant physical enjoyment of life which distinguishes Anacreon. He has nothing sensual, but is altogether sentimental. His *Du-*

szenka (Psyche) which is his principal poem, is a chaste and airy allegory, like the Paradise and the Peri, in Moore's Lalla Rookh. It has not the oriental gorgeous brilliancy of the English poem; but it has all the fascination of Sclavonian simplicity, enhanced with the poet's natural tenderness of feeling. To appreciate all the charms of his style, it is necessary to know the subject to which he has wedded it; inasmuch as the expression seems to have originated in the subject, and to have derived from thence its peculiar graces. The Duszenka which he describes is the diminutive of *Dusza, (the Soul,)* and signifies the highest and most airy sublimation of the soul —a soul without a paragon. It expresses all that is fair, good, lovely, and delightful. It is

> "The fairest of saints that Devotion has sainted,
> Divinest of all the divine,
> All the pictures of beauty that art ever painted
> Can give no idea of thine." *

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* This is taken from Mr Bowring's translation of Duszenka.—The Sclavonian language is in diminutives extremely rich—richer by far than the Italian, or any other. Each diminutive has its different shades of meaning, more or less moral, more or less tender. *Dusza* has three diminutives—Duszka, Duszeczka, Duszenka. The diminutives of some words are exceedingly numerous, as those of the Polish Jan (*John*)—Janek, Janeczek, Janusieczek, Jas, Jasio, Jasinek, Jasineczek. Adjectives, too, have their diminutives, which contribute to render the language very copious.

Among the living poets, Karamzin and Zukowski are the most celebrated. They are both admired by the nation, and distinguished by the patronage of the Emperor.

Karamzin has for a long time occupied the first station among the Russian literati. He has been, at different times, editor of several literary magazines. His genius as a writer is comprehensive: he excels in Idylles, novels, travels, and fugitive pieces of poetry: Among the last are a great many translations from different languages. His works are the most popular in Russia, and his taste is classic. He is besides historiographer to the emperor; and has lately adorned this honourable station by publishing a history of Russia, in several volumes,—a work exhibiting a profound knowledge of Sclavonian antiquities, and written with all the charms of eloquence. It has been already translated into German, French, and Italian. This history is the first work of importance in Russian modern literature; and it is also the first which, from its excellence, has attracted the attention of foreigners.

Zukowski is held to be the most original Russian poet. His originality, however, is not so much national as individual; being the originality of his own mind. There is no resemblance between him and any other Russian poet. He is never

guilty of common-place in thought; but neither has he their simplicity of language. His ideas are new and often mystical—the bold creations of his soul. His language is like the stormy sea rolling in foaming waves. Sometimes he is an imitator; but, even in imitation, the subjects are a-kin to the predominating cast of his soul; and he never has before his eye lesser models than Ossian, Schiller, or Burger. He has given an excellent imitation of Burger's Leonora. His poetry is mostly lyrical and romantic,—without, however, belonging strictly to any class of composition. It expresses only the free ardent moods of his own capacious mind.

There are, moreover, other poets who have enriched the Russian literature, both with original works and translations, as Dmitriew and Krilow the fabulists. Kostrow is the translator of Homer and of Ossian. Batuszkow has given a translation of Tibullus. Ozerow is the most distinguished dramatic poet. But, respecting these and other writers, I would refer you, for more satisfactory information, to *Bowring's* excellent *Specimens of the Russian Poets*, where you will find an enumeration of their works, and a pretty minute account of their lives. I meant only to give you a general sketch of their literary characters.

With these remarks I conclude what I have to

say concerning the infant literature of this great Sclavonian nation. It excites more curiosity than it affords matter for philosophical speculation. Let us now proceed to Poland.

Poland has ever been regarded as the most enlightened of all Sclavonian countries. The government of the Poles, which at first was a mild monarchy, and afterwards a republic, free even to excess, had been advantageous to the exertion of thought. Accordingly the Poles proceeded rapidly towards civilization. At a very early period they already had a rich and extensive literature. Nor was it confined to their own country, but extended beyond it. The conscious supremacy of their freedom and their civilization produced in them the same self-conceit which distinguished the ancient Greeks and Romans. They looked upon the neighbouring nations as barbarians, gross in mind and slavish in character; and entertained the highest estimation of themselves:—a circumstance which made other nations call them the "*Proud Poles*,"—as, of late, their courage has drawn from the French the appellation of "*Brave Nation*,"—"*Braves Polonais*." The same epithet was bestowed on them by Napoleon in exile.* Trained up in this national pride from their infancy, they never afterward forgot the

* O'Meara's Napoleon in Exile, Vol. I. p. 190.

prerogatives and political condition of their ancestors. Even in their humiliation, they have not lost the features of their former character, or, what Milton calls, the "*human face divine.*" It is the dignity of human nature, fostered by liberty and wisdom, that has advanced Great Britain to her superiority, both political and literary, over all other nations of the earth; and the same dignity once made Poland the cradle of learning, and the nurse of heroes and statesmen,—made her surpass all the other Sclavonians in literary acquirements as well as martial prowess, and maintain a long political ascendancy and often dominion over them. The same cause has, at a later period, made the Poles distinguish themselves by the most enthusiastic sacrifices for the restoration of their country; which shows that the strength of their ancient character had outlived all the vicissitudes of fortune.

Every nation that has grown up to the fulness of political and moral freedom, must necessarily present a great and interesting object of contemplation. Such nations dignify the human race. Among them the motives are noble and pure, for they spring up freely from the very nature of the soul. Their thoughts are undisguised; their actions unconstrained; their inborn nature revealed in all its nobility. Their deeds are therefore recorded, and they are worth the recording. There

is scarcely a nation in Europe which can boast of so many historians as Poland. To enumerate them here would be tedious were it possible, such has been their number since the time of Martinus Polonus and Kadlubko, the oldest Polish chroniclers, down to that of Bandkie, Niemcewicz, and Lelewel, the latest and now living historians of Poland. Events of every description have been nowhere so sedulously recorded as in Poland: ages have handed them down to ages. Almost in every noble family, it was customary to commit to writing all domestic and political incidents, and consign them as a legacy and an object of pride to future generations. Accordingly, we find the histories of Poland written in various languages—Latin, Polish, and German, and both in prose and verse. This is not to be wondered at; for where there is freedom for action, actions are performed; and wherever actions are performed, if any literature exists, there are historians to celebrate them.

The Poles are the only people among the Sclavonian nations who have a systematic legislature. Some of the Sclavonian tribes have no written law; ancient customs constitute all their jurisprudence. Others were arrested in the very act of making their own statutes, and were constrained to adopt the laws imposed upon them by their foreign rulers. In this situation are Bohemia

and Moravia. Others, as the Russians, were governed by the special ukazes of their Dukes and Czars. Under the present Emperor an attempt has been made to systematise them into a *corpus juris*. The legislature of the Poles is like their history, very voluminous: it bears the same spirit as their elective system, and was unfortunately attended with the same laxity in the execution. Their *statutes* and *constitutions* are entirely national, either suggested by particular circumstances, or founded on their ancient usages (*consuetudines*). Though they were also conversant with the Roman law, their learned lawyers have not yet been able to ascertain whether this had any influence on the Polish legislation. It is, I believe, more probable that the difficulty of applying the Roman law to the very different national character of the Poles rendered this study in Poland rather an object of curiosity than of practical utility.

As for the poetry of Poland, it was, for a long time, written partly in Latin, and partly in Polish. Only of late has the mother tongue been exclusively employed. In both languages the Poles have excellent poems. In both the species of poetry are nearly the same, namely, versified chronicles and legends—lyrics, pastorals, elegies, satires, songs, and verses, on different occasions. Some early attempts were made in the drama and

the epic: the latter, by Casimir Sarbiewski, in his Lechiad; a poem in which he proposed to describe the origin of the Polish nation, which design he left unfinished.

Specimens of dramatic pieces began to appear in Poland towards the middle of the sixteenth century. The first specimens were the tragedies of *Sophrona*, written by Sebastian of Lenczyca, and of the *Mass*, by Bernard Ochin. The *Return of the Greek Ambassadors* was composed by John Kochanowski. This piece was written for a particular occasion, and was represented in Uiazdow. Shortly afterwards appeared a number of religious mysteries, the subjects of which were taken from holy writ. The best, to my knowledge, is Josephus Castus, by Simonowicz, who is better known as a pastoral poet. These pieces, for a long time, used to be performed in monasteries and schools. They were written for the most part in Latin, and sometimes in Polish: those in the latter of these languages are still performed in some parts of Poland at Christmas, for the amusement of the common people. The establishment of a regular stage in Poland took place about the middle of the eighteenth century. The pieces performed were mostly translations from the French of Corneille, Racine, and Moliere. These foreign models, however, diverted the Poles from original composition. The origi-

nal Polish dramas began to appear on the stage towards the end of the last century.

The spirit that distinguishes all Polish poetry, and, indeed, all the poetry of the Sclavonians, is mildness. It reflects, as I have elsewhere shown, the peaceful aspect of the landscape, and has for its theme, the quiet occupations of agricultural and pastoral life. Poland is the country of rural poetry; and in this her literature has always excelled. Theocritus and Virgil have not, in my opinion, introduced more real imagery of rural life into their poetry than Simonowicz and Karpinski. Their thoughts, as well as their expressions, are simple: their learning, when they do show it, is not cumbersome, but is employed to lend an expression to their poetic images. In reading them you cannot fancy them but as happy ploughmen, following their ploughs, or sowing the seed which they expect soon to reap; or as shepherds, reclining on the sloping hill-side, or

> Banqueting through the flowery vales,
> And woods so full of nightingales.

These mild features of rural life have so completely modelled the habitual temper of the Poles, that they have transfused the spirit which they inspire into all their literary compositions. Rural imagery and the realities of rural life breathe in their elegies, their tragedies, and even their comedies: and the more these enter as elements,

the more their productions have the genuine stamp of nationality.

The Polish poetry has of late been historical, for its chief object has been to commemorate the glorious achievements of the ancient Poles. Its general strain, therefore, is elegiac. The contrast of ancient glory with subsequent misfortunes disposes the mind of this people to a mournful bent of ideas.

The mathematical and physical sciences began to flourish in the fifteenth century; and in their progress they have at one time rapidly advanced, and at another have been neglected. But of this hereafter, as also of the speculative sciences of a moral nature. My observations respecting Poland have yet been only general and cursory, but I shall speak more explicitly in the sequel.

Such is a summary view of the modern literature of all the Sclavonian nations. The Poles and Russians alone can be said to possess any independent literary fame. The rest of the Sclavonians await their emancipation from the yoke of foreign literature, under which their own is altogether depressed, and can never rise to any eminence. Most of these nations are subject to the German sceptre, and some to the Turks. Their civilization must continue to be but faint so long as their native literature is thus kept in servitude to one which is foreign. The language in which

one has heard his lullaby sung while an infant, is the fittest to convey him wisdom when a man. Europe, having long employed the Latin language in all her works and important concerns, as the only communicative medium, was a long time but a minor to the Greeks and Romans, and had properly no literature of her own. But Europe soon rose into manhood, after the different nations began to think and write in their own languages. Such helpless minors, however, are the Sclavonians at present, to the amount of no less than twenty millions; and, what must be greatly lamented, they have no fair prospect of ever arriving at a state of manhood.

But it may be here objected, that the Sclavonian tribes, being amidst a people so civilized as the Germans, ought not to remain long in this depressed state of ignorance. The objection might, indeed, apply to a rude people coming in contact with one more civilized, of the same origin, but it does not hold with respect to the Sclavonians, a people altogether different from the Germans. They cannot sympathise with the Germans in any thing. To be the successful instructors of a people, it is necessary to establish first a mutual sympathy; and the Germans cannot do this on account of the national hatred prevailing amongst the Sclavonians against them. The diversity of language is an obstacle to such sympathy. To promote civiliza-

tion, it is necessary that the natives should extend it among the natives, through the medium of their mother tongue.

The mind dwells with delight on the ages in which the national languages have displaced the foreign, and in which the prevalence of the native literature has at length given rise to a general literary enthusiasm. An Italian is proud of the age of Dante and Petrarch, who first made their countrymen listen to the sonorous stanzas of their own language. The French reckon the golden era of their literature to have been during the reign of Lewis XIV. when a great variety of excellent works were written in their own language. The English and Germans, since they began to write their mother tongues, and to develope in them each their peculiar casts of mind, soon came to get the start of all Europe in national literature. The authors they have produced are as numerous as the stars of the *Via lactea*, and like it, too, are bright and everlasting. But there are some single luminaries to whom the sympathies of nations must ever cling, for no other reason than because they were the first to write their native tongue, and may, therefore, be said to shine like solitary stars amid the darkness of the ages in which they lived. Such is Luther. Luther has done more for Germany by his translation of the Bible into German, than all the Latin-learned

monks before him. The French, again, are proud of their Troubadours; and the Germans refer the glory of their poetry rather to the Mine-singers and Meister-singers, than to the Latin odes of their Baldeus. The first contain the free native effusions of the soul in the vernacular, the other in a borrowed and dead language. The Poles admire the Latin odes of their Casimir Sarbiewski, and sometimes take pleasure in reading "*Credite, Io, credite posteri;*" but their sympathies cling to John Kochanowski, when he, in their native tongue, pours out the deep feelings of his pensive spirit. It is not, I think, the want of thought that made the modern Latin poets inferior in reputation to those who have written in the native language, for they are known to have been the greatest poets of the period in which they lived; but it is the difficulty, I may venture to say, of translating the particular native ideas into an idiom to which from birth they were strangers, which cramped their inspiration, and rendered their task heavy, and their labour unpopular. Had there been no such inconvenience, the sublime soul of Milton might have appeared with the same graces in his Latin Hexameters as in his Paradise Lost; and our Kochanowski's Latin elegies might have been equal to his "Laments." But the case is quite the reverse.

The historical remarks I have here introduced,

in order to illustrate the disadvantages of using the Latin language, are equally applicable to any of the modern languages in their influence upon the Sclavonian countries; for they have had the same withering effect upon the native literature, wherever political circumstances rendered the study of them necessary. The foreign languages, I think, should only be viewed as foreign goods, rather as articles of luxury than for daily use. Wherever these have become necessary, their effect has never been harmless. In Bohemia and Moravia, where the Austrian government made the German the language of the court, of the schools, and of polite society, the national literature has declined. A result somewhat similar threatens to take place in Gallicia, where the German is also introduced with the view of Germanizing three millions of Poles. Such attempts must prove as vain as they are illiberal. Centuries could not transform the Vendens in Lusatia and Mecklenburgh, almost in the centre of Germany, into Germans, nor the Slovaks in Hungary into Hungarians. They even preserve the Sclavonic names of towns, villages, rivers, and mountains; while the foreigners amidst whom they live bestow on them others from their own language. The endeavours to metamorphose nations cannot have any general success: they may prevail over a few individuals; but the bulk of the community must resist them. They can only

serve to retard the progress of civilization, which, in course of ages, will at last be triumphant in spite of all obstacles, and posterity in its future annals will curse its depressors.

Such is the unhappy consequence of the Sclavonian tribes being dissevered from the great body of their kindred nations. Anciently they used to denominate every foreigner a *foe*. If they now apply the same epithet, it is the foreigners who are to blame. The philanthropy of the present day should have taught them manners more conciliating. All the Sclavonian tribes, with the exception of those under the wise and moderate government of Prussia, are swayed by a regardless and oppressive sceptre, which, instead of encouraging them to keep pace with other nations in improvement, actually prohibits them from doing so; and thus they are stationary, and even retrograde. We see the most powerful nations on the globe *grouped* according to their respective languages; all their moral and physical strength seems to depend upon this *independent union*. There are some who have, even after their downfall, still survived in their language,—as the Greeks and Romans. In like manner, why should not the Sclavonians enjoy the advantages to which their language entitles them? Rivers, mountains, seas, and other sorts of boundaries, are barriers that may be overcome, or like ditches that may be leapt

over: But the language is a granite rock; which, however deep you may pierce, remains hard and impenetrable. Suppose a barbarian should destroy a whole nation, the last survivor would never recognize him as a brother: for the mother tongue is not the same. A common language makes one family of the most extensive nation; and, as far as the language reaches, the god Terminus extends the empire of the people. Every principle that would oppose the union of a people possessing one common language, is, in political system, false and illiberal. All the Sclavonians unconsciously tend to this union with each other, as if to a common centre of gravitation. There are barriers which they have to surmount: they need a Herculean hand to remove them. But sooner or later this Hercules must be born in the energy of his people.

LETTER IV.

Dr Connor's "State of Learning in Poland," and Remarks on it —Oriental Languages—Jews and Tartars—Study of the Greek, Latin, French, English, and German.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER so long a survey of the different Sclavonian countries, and the intricate mazes of their complicated fortunes, it gives me pleasure to find myself at last on the ground of Poland: and

> "Still as I view each well-known scene,
> Think what is now and what has been."

Henceforth I shall confine my observations to that country; and, in giving you an account of the state of its literature, I shall avail myself of a few passages from the History of Poland, written by your countryman, Dr Connor, in 1698. He was physician to our king John Sobieski, and seems to have been a man who knew how to collect accurate information, and to digest what he observed. Quotations from so respectable an authority will best suit my purpose. In these, therefore, I shall not be sparing, and shall endeavour to sup-

ply from my own information whatever I find to be deficient.

" In the kingdom of Poland and great duchy of Lithuania," says he, " there are two famous universities, with all sorts of professors. The former of these was founded at Cracow by Casimir the Great, and was finished by Jagello, or Vladislaus V., in the year 1401, conformable to the last will and testament of the queen Hedvige; and the latter at Wilna, being at first but an academy founded by King Stephen, but afterwards was erected into a university by Pope Gregory XIII. at the request of Valerian, bishop of that city, who had very much augmented the colleges and endowments."

So far Dr Connor is right. But he omits to mention the university of Zamosc, founded by the celebrated John Zamoyski, which, though less richly endowed than the others, can, however, boast of some celebrated professors, and has produced some excellent scholars. This institution participated in the disasters of the country, which at last brought it to decay. The Count Stanislaus Zamoyski, the descendant of its founder, reestablished it in the form of an extensive Gymnasium; but removed it from Zamosc to another place, called Szczebrzeszyn. There were also three inferior academies in Leopol, Olyka, and Polock; but they were more properly seminaries

for the education of the clergy, and particularly of the Jesuits. The academy of Polock remained in the possession of the Jesuits till the entire expulsion of that order from Russia in the year 1820.

After this comment, let us now advert to the following passage:

"In both these Universities the chief study is to speak good Latin, for as to all parts of polite learning, the Poles are not so curious as in other countries, yet have they a great many that will write good verses, for their genius is mightily bent that way; and, besides, they are very apt to quote classic authors in their discourse, and this particularly when they get drunk, which is very frequently. Their poet Sarbievius Casimir is no small ornament to his country, who, in his odes, has endeavoured to imitate Horace, and the purity of his language is not contemptible."

Nothing is more true than this; and, if I may judge from this passage, your countryman must have been a "jolly companion." He must have been often in parties, where the Poles *got drunk*, and probably often drank along with them a *vitrum gloriosum*.* He tells us, that he was at a

* The *vitrum gloriosum* is the Polish tumbler. It was capable of containing an equal quantity with the half of your common bottle. It was finely laboured with engraved fi-

great hunting-match with King John Sobieski, and dined with him. He seems to have received frequent invitations from the first characters in Poland; he spells the Polish names well, in which most foreigners fail, who have not received cards. He must also have been a pretty good scholar, for he quotes Cæsar and Suetonius, and our historians Piasecki and Heidenstein. He knew even the Latin poems of our Casimir Sarbiewski; but in the cold indifferent approbation which he bestows on him, that "the purity of his language is not contemptible," I cannot acquiesce, and have the strongest authority on my side. I heard you once maintain, that "the Latin of the Polish poet is purer than that of the Scottish Buchanan." Again, I read in Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, that Sarbiewski is superior to the English Cowley.* I am naturally disposed to think well of my countrymen; but, I confess, I set more value

gures, and was handed round, when the health of any one in the company was proposed. Every one was obliged to drink it to the bottom, else he was considered as insulting the person whose health was drunk. The custom, though not entirely in disuse on birth-days and wedding solemnities, is now obsolete, "more honoured in the breach than the observance."

* "His style and diction are really classical; while Cowley, who resembled Casimir in many respects, completely barbarizes his Latinity, and even his metre, by the heterogeneous nature of his thoughts."—Vol. II. p. 295

on the opinion of foreigners concerning him than my own, particularly when they prefer ours to theirs.

It is pleasing to quote such an authority as that of Dr Connor, not because it is flattering, but because it is true, since he was so well acquainted both with the learning and the domestic affairs of the Poles. Let us then indulge a little more in this pleasure:

"They have had several Latin historians among them, such as Cromerus, Starovolscius, &c. who have all written the annals and constitutions of their country. They have likewise had some historians who have written in their own language. They also have not been wanting in learned divines, great philosophers, famous astronomers, logicians, &c. The great astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus was a native of this country, having had his birth in the city of Thorn in Regal Prussia.* The reason why these learned men have not transmitted more to posterity was, because that while they lived there was but little or no printing in Poland."

Now, after such an account, can you fail to entertain a very different opinion of the Poles who have been treated with so much disparagement in the writings of ignorant or malevolent foreigners?

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* See Appendix, Note 3.

On reading this passage, my national feelings are almost as proud as yours must be, who have Bacon, Newton, Hume, and Tillotson. But I feel it humiliating to think that we have no match for Shakespeare.

I shall here mention some of these celebrated men, that you may judge for yourself, whether the Poles have reason to be so proud of them. At the head of them may be placed Copernicus, born in the year 1473. Vitellio, (Ciolek,) who, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, first in Europe elucidated the theory of light, long before Newton: Gregory of Sanok lived about the year 1440, and already, at that early period, about one hundred years before Bacon, he affirmed the scholastic philosophy to be *somnia vigilantium*: Zaluzanski, in the seventeenth century, discovered the fructification of the plants before Linnæus, to whom, however, this discovery is commonly attributed: Casimir Sarbiewski, the modern Horace of Europe: Bzovius, an elegant continuator of Baronius's History of the Church: Hosius, President of the famous Council of Trent in 1562.* Of many others I shall acquaint you hereafter. In different councils of the church we see the clergy of Poland occupy the next seat to the clergy of Bononia, which was held as a very

* See Appendix, Note 4.

honourable place, and to which nothing but superior learning could have entitled them. *

"The divines in Poland make all their learning consist in adapting Aristotle's logics and metaphysics to their school divinity, so that you may every where hear them talk much of Entities, Modes, Quiddities, Essences of Things, and the like, for they value themselves more in being well versed in the signification of logical terms, than in the nature of things which they reason about. In this country they have a particular veneration for Albertus Magnus, and quote him in support of any assertion, in like manner as the Spaniards and Italians are accustomed to do Aristotle, though they have not less respect for the last philosopher than other nations have. Yet, notwithstanding, they seldom take right his meaning, and particularly in matters that are ambiguous, for they have published several large commentaries upon him which do frequently contradict one another."

Here you find some praise and a great deal of censure. I must confess that, at the end of the seventeenth century, to which Dr Connor's account relates, theology and philosophy ought not to have been in such a state. But at this time Poland had made a retrograde march in literature. She became more than ever a Catho-

* See Appendix, Note 5.

lic country, by the oppression of Protestant sects. The Jesuits, as I will show in another place, depressed the minds of the people by fanaticism. They cultivated with ardour the scholastic philosophy; for it promoted the discussion of *forms*, and diverted the mind from inquiring into realities. After the era of Bacon, most Protestant countries followed either his path, or one of their own, in searching after useful knowledge; the Jesuits in Poland recalled almost all that the *Doctores Seraphici, Angelici, Irrefragabiles* had ever dreamed. This period was the forerunner of the evil destiny which subsequently befel the Poles. Still, however, though their powers were directed to useless objects, yet they could not discontinue the activity to which they had been inured in former and better times.

"As for physicians in Poland," says the Doctor, "there are no great numbers there, and those few that are, for the most part, are either French, Italians, or Germans, scarce any of the natives caring to addict themselves to that profession."

His observation is but partly just. It is just in reference to the period at which it was made, when there really was a scarcity of physicians who were natives; but in reference to former times the remark does not hold. History informs us, that the Poles, before this period, had a number of celebrated physicians. These were graduated

sometimes in the university at Cracow, and sometimes in foreign academies. Copernicus himself was graduated doctor of medicine at Padua; and so also were many others of the Poles. Some were celebrated even abroad for their professional skill. Martin of Olkusz, in the middle of the fifteenth century, was physician to Mathias Corwin, King of Hungary; Felix of Lowicz, author of several medical works, was physician to the Emperor Charles V.; Struthius was several times called to Spain when the life of Philip II. was in danger, and also to Soliman II. Sultan of Turkey. He must of course have been one of the most celebrated physicians in Europe.* You see then that Dr Connor's assertion is not altogether well founded. But his objection against the "*pride*" of the Poles, which disinclined them to the study of medicine, is just, at least in reference to the period at which he wrote, when there was a general prejudice against all professions, and that of medicine among the rest. Even lawyers were despised. "Of the honesty of this profession, the Poles," says Dr Connor, "had as little opinion as any people in Europe." The only occupations held in honour amongst them was the sword in war, and the council in peace; for these were concerned in the welfare of the whole commonwealth.

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* See Note 6.

All other professions, which drew any pecuniary rewards, were looked upon as illiberal and degrading. The practice of some of them was even forbidden by the law, on pain of forfeiting honour. For instance, if it could be proved of a nobleman that he retailed by yards or by pints, he irrecoverably lost his rank and respectability in society. A nobleman would rather plough than trade; and it often happened that he was called to war from the plough, and returned, like Cincinnatus, to the plough to cultivate the land he had defended. Thus you see the Poles have always followed noble and liberal callings. Lower, though more profitable pursuits were neglected, and held subordinate to the more generous motives of promoting the good of the whole community. A prodigal liberality was their predominant character. Usury, being held as a most degrading practice, and unworthy of a Christian, was left to the Jews. At one time it was reckoned a matter of indifference for a nobleman to understand arithmetic. The *auri sacra fames* was despised. In the twelfth century, when the German Emperor conducted Skarbek, the Polish Ambassador, to show him his treasury, of which he appeared to be proud, the Ambassador took off a golden ring from his finger, and, throwing it into the treasury, said, "Let the gold join with the gold." The Emperor meanly replied, "*Habe dank*," (I thank

you.) It is a pleasing thing to trace the dignity of human nature to its remote uncorrupted source, and contemplate its aspect appearing even through prejudices, in features at once so simple and so bright!

Dr Connor tells us farther, that "the Poles are extremely expert in speaking and in writing Latin; yet they are not curious of any oriental languages." It is true that the study of these, at the time of his residence in Poland, was neglected; but, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they were much studied at the University of Cracow. David Leonard, in 1528, and John Campsen, in 1534, were public professors in that place. Stankar and Grzebski are recorded to have written it with facility. Basil Golynski could speak it. Albert Gryglicki and some others understood not only the ancient but the modern oriental languages; some having acquired them from books, others during a long captivity among the Turks, with whom the Poles had frequent wars. At the time of the Reformation in particular, a knowledge of the oriental languages was indispensable in making translations of the Bible into Polish. Wujek, who was the principal translator, knew Hebrew, and consulted the original text.

The study of eastern literature has been renewed in later times in the University of Wilna; and here are now three orientalists of some note, Pro-

fessors Zukowski, Bobrowski, and Senkowski. The Count Rzewuski is an oriental scholar of the first eminence. During his long stay at Vienna, he formed, with Dr Hammer, the plan of publishing a repository of Asiatic literature, called *Fundgruben des Orients*, which is now considered as the best work of the kind on the Continent, and to which he is himself a contributor. He travelled in the East for about four years; and has lately returned, bringing, no doubt, great treasures of oriental knowledge. His journey to the ruins of Palmyra has been published in the New London Magazine. His longest stay was in Arabia.

It may be farther remarked, that, from the number of Jews residing in the country, Hebrew is nowhere better known, or the study of it more facilitated than in Poland. Some of that nation lay claim even to scholarship in Hebrew. Hulewicz wrote De Linguæ Græcæ regulis eiusque cum Hebraicis Harmonia, L. Bat. 1746. Rozenfeld, a learned Jew, now living at Warsaw, is about this time expected to publish his History of Poland in Hebrew. The Polish Rabbins are, in point of learning, the most celebrated among the Jews in Europe—particularly for their thorough knowledge of the Bible, and of the Talmud, which is its Commentary, and is regarded as the legal code of the Jews. They have a sort of Academy in *Brzesc*, where the Rabbins are educated. Very

few of the common Jews, however, understand the Hebrew thoroughly: most of them recite or rather chaunt their Hebrew prayers, in a sort of nasal twang, without knowing the meaning.

The same remark may be applied to nearly 30,000 of the Polish Tartars, who recite by rote the dogmas of the Alcoran, while the Molnas alone possess the key to their meaning, over all the *Mechet* parishes. These Tartars came, along with their wives and children, in the fourteenth century to Poland, exiled from their own country in consequence of a revolt, in which they had a hand. They found protection under Witold, a warlike duke of Lithuania, brother to the King of Poland. He assigned to this fugitive tribe settlements near Wilna and Biala, where they have lived till the present day in villages, as landed proprietors. They have repaid, on different occasions, this hospitality with attachment to the Poles. In war they used to join the Polish army on horseback. Bielak was their famous leader under Kosciuszko. Their troop, called *ulany*, occurs in the modern European tactics under the name of *lancers*, so formidable in the campaigns of Napoleon. A regiment of such Tartar lancers, with turban and crescent, followed Napoleon to Moscow, to fight in the cause of Poland. They are naturalized Poles, and known as men of acknowledged probity. And it is remarkable of

them, that, in the judicial transactions, no document exists of a Tartar being ever found chargeable with any criminal act.

The Greek language, neglected in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the Jesuits, had been much studied in the two preceding centuries. The first public professors of Greek in the University of Cracow were Liban of Lignitz, and Illicin, an Italian. Subsequently, there was no literary character in Poland who did not understand it. The Greek became at last so common, that in the latter part of the sixteenth century there was no school of any consequence in Cracow, or over all the country, where it was not taught. At this time numerous translations were made from the Greek into Polish. While few of the European nations, except the Italians, thought of making any such attempts, the Poles knew Anacreon, Homer, and the voluminous works of Aristotle, from translations.

The taste for Greek literature has, after a long interruption, been again revived. Within the short period of the last twenty years there have appeared no less than three translations of Homer, by Dmochowski, Przybylski, and Staszyc: a translation of Lucian by Krasicki, and one of Plutarch by Golanski. Translations of all the Greek tragedies are now preparing for publication, by Mr Okraszewski, and of Xenophon's works by Jagel-

lo. Different learned men have united to promote the taste for Greek literature: but to none of these are the Poles so much indebted as to Groddeck, professor of Greek and Latin literature in Wilna. The exquisite taste displayed in his lectures on the classics endears this literature to his pupils, and promotes the study of it throughout the country, wherever their learned avocations call them. From the multiplicity of objects which his lectures embrace, the complete course occupies no less than four years, though he lectures two hours every day during nine months. In his writings he combines the deep learning of a philologist with the exquisite taste of a modern scholar. His views of the philosophy, poetry, and antiquities of Greece and Rome, are no less profound than interesting and instructive.

Dr Connor farther informs us, that he has somewhere read that "almost all the common people in Poland speak Latin fluently; that he had a servant, while in that country, who always used to talk to him in that language; that when Sigismund the First sent the Bishop of Warmia his ambassador to Vienna, the Emperor was surprised to hear even the Polish coachman speak Latin fluently. Also, after Sigismund II.'s death, when ambassadors were sent to bring Henry of Valois into Poland, the French wondered, that not one of all their train but spoke their language

with great address." The same account in favour of the Latinity of the Poles is confirmed by the historian De Thou.

For this Dr Connor assigns various reasons, all of which may be true: the first is even somewhat naive. "The chief reasons," says he, "why the Poles generally affect the Latin, is, first, From their natural dispositions to learn it. Secondly, By reason of the syntax of their mother tongue, the Sclavonian, which has great affinity with that language, for they both decline their nouns and conjugate their verbs as the Romans did. Thirdly, Because in all the villages throughout the nation they have schoolmasters for that purpose, who are either rectors of parishes, or some other qualified person appointed by them, or by the bishop of the diocese. And, fourthly, Because in all towns of note the Jesuits have colleges set apart to instruct youth in that language."

This is a real fact. Let us take a historical view to illustrate the phenomenon more fully. Previous to the Reformation very little had been written in the Polish language. The Latin was introduced into that country along with the Roman Catholic religion. It became the language of the church service—of the schools—of the court—of public business—and of good society. In short, Latin was then considered to be the true source of knowledge, and the only vehicle

for communicating it to others. In Cracow even sermons were preached in Latin, and this not before a select, but a mixed congregation. This may be a pretty strong proof that the Latin was much cultivated in Poland, at least in Cracow, which was the principal seat of learning. I doubt, however, whether a knowledge of it was equally diffused over all her provinces. It is possible, and even probable, that even in the parish schools Latin was taught; yet the language of the great body of the common people must have continued to be the Polish. The servants of the nobility knew, indeed, Latin, for they had opportunity to acquire it by hearing the conversation of their masters: besides, this set of people in Poland were commonly half scholars; who, though born peasants, recommended themselves, by means of a little Latin, to some menial situation at the courts of the nobles, which was held to be a place of some honour.

In Poland, as in other countries, the native language was, at an early period, considered as unfit for literary compositions. The ecclesiastics, at that time the only class of men who had any pretension to learning, received all their education through the medium of the Latin language. They were, therefore, better acquainted with it than with their mother tongue; and wrote it with ease, and even elegance.

The Reformation having extended from Germany to Poland, threatened to introduce a change of language as well as of opinion. The religious dogmas which till then had been the mysteries of the priestcraft, like the hieroglyphics among the ancient priests of Egypt, were now to be divulged, and, for the temporal as well as the eternal happiness of mankind, were to be disseminated among all classes of the nation. Among the most expedient means employed for these purposes was a language intelligible and familiar to the people. The Polish language accordingly began, now for the first time, to be used in public speaking and writing, and was employed both by the reformers and by their opponents. The former employed it as an instrument to destroy the old superstitions and abuses; the latter to check the progress of what they declared to be a dangerous revolution. The arguments of both were addressed to the common people, to convince them of the truth or falsehood of what was stated, that they might choose according to their own conviction. It was the first time that men of learning were seen standing before the tribunals of plebeians, the accused and accusers of each other. It was the first time that learned pride appealed to the simple natural understanding of the ignorant, and expected from them an ultimate decision.

During these altercations, it may perhaps be

thought, that the study of Latin must then have become only of secondary consequence; but no. It was studied with more eagerness than ever; for works written in this language were the only stores which afforded weapons of attack, and supplied skill in disarming an adversary; its study, therefore, suffered not the least interruption, but engaged an equal share of attention with the native language. In disputes which the learned maintained with the learned, the Latin was employed; in addressing the people, the vernacular tongue. In both voluminous works were published; but still the greater number of these were written in Latin. I might here instance the large folios of the Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum, and the ponderous volumes of Polish Chronicles and Statutes.

It is still farther remarkable, that, at the same period in which the Polish language appeared in its vigour, the Latin was also spoken and written in greatest purity. Cromer's Chronicle of Poland, and the Polish translation of it, made their appearance almost at the same time; and the one is as remarkable for the elegance of its Latin, as the other for that of the Polish. The same observation may be applied to many other works both in prose and verse. Thus the same period which is styled by the Poles the golden era of their native literature, was also that of their Latin.

At a subsequent period, some of the elective kings, who were for the most part enlightened men, eagerly promoted the study of the classics. Stephen Bathory used to address the school-boys with his "*Disce puer Latine, Ego te faciam Mosci Panie,*" (a great Lord.) This was a very popular act of the sovereign, and gave great encouragement to young scholars. The Poles have for a long time been accustomed to regard the classics as the source of all knowledge: they were fond of pursuing the path of their ancestors. The literature of other European nations was yet in its infancy, and of too doubtful a value to divert the attention of the Poles.

The study of Latin was promoted still more by the Jesuits, who introduced it into their schools, and made it an important branch of education, in preference even to the mother tongue. Their order had been originally brought into Poland by the Catholics, for the purpose of suppressing the heresies, as they called them, of the Lutherans, Calvinists, Socinians, Arians, and others. These last teachers used to address their congregations in the mother tongue, which they introduced also into their church liturgy. The Jesuits directed all their efforts and address to undermine the native language, and to establish in its stead the Latin as before. A popular language would have exposed their doctrine to the people, and perhaps

have raised doubts against their veracity, by enlightening the minds of the laity; to which consequences they were very violently opposed. They wished to keep knowledge as their own exclusive property; and a learned language like the Latin seemed the fittest instrument to aid them in their design. In promoting it they succeeded in a wonderful degree. The numerous convents which they had founded in all parts of the country, and the schools attached to each, helped them in monopolizing the business of education of the youth, and in becoming also masters of the consciences of the people.

At this time the Polish language began to lose its purity, and to become more and more overcharged with quotations of sentences from the Latin, which glittering foil was looked upon as genuine precious gems; so that sometimes it was difficult to decide whether the language was a Polonized Latin or a Latinized Polish. The mania of Latinizing every thing arrived at last to such an excess, under the reign of the two Saxon Augustuses, that whole poems were got up, in which the greatest part of the Polish words, by affixing Latin terminations to them, assumed the appearance of the Latin, the style then taking the name of *Macaronic*.

It is remarkable, that, with this corruption, or, as I may call it, anarchy of the language, the an-

archy of the Polish government increased in the same proportion; and that, as soon as the language began to emerge from its corruption, the anarchy of the government began to clear away. It is at least, in point of history, true, that the patriotic efforts made under the reign of Stanislaus, the last King of Poland, were directed against both of these evils. Strange coincidence betwixt the language and the government—betwixt the literary and the political condition of the people. It evidently shows, that the real strength of nations depends upon their moral energies.

Such is a historical view of the reign of the Latin language in Poland. It descended at last from its former ambitious height to a more suitable, though not less honourable, station in our schools and academies, where it forms an important branch of liberal education, but still is subordinate to the native language, to the cultivation of which all the efforts of the Poles are chiefly directed.

Foreign languages are much studied in Poland; but in like manner as the Latin, they are not considered so essential in themselves as for the information of which they become the medium; that is, the acquisition of them is held desirable as a means, but not as an end,—useful in so far as they administer to the cravings of minds engaged in literary and scientific pursuits. In this respect the Poles may be consider-

ed to have been completely *eclectic.* They first adhered to the study of the French language, because the French were at that time the most enlightened people in Europe. The works of their poets and philosophers were universally regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of excellence. These afforded nourishment to their minds, and, being considered as the best standards at the time, gave a direction to their mental exertions. If they were much employed in transfusing into their own language the ideas contained in them, they did it principally in the view of enriching their own literature.

But, besides the translations from the French, there appeared occasionally, in periodical works, translations from the English, particularly of some *papers* from the Spectator. These short specimens were soon followed by translations of greater length, such as Johnson's Rasselas, Young's Night Thoughts, Fielding's Tom Jones, Paradise Regained, Pope's Essay on Criticism and Man, and his Rape of the Lock, &c. The Poles appear to have perceived that a literature like the French, which mounts upon stately stilts, could not long be a guide for them in their more humble and natural walk, and inclined, therefore, to the more sober literature of the English. They possess now many Polish translations of Ossian's Poems: and, since the time of Krasicki and Tymieniecki,

who first made their countrymen acquainted with them, they multiply almost daily, from the particular predilection of the young poets for this species of poetry. Shakespeare's Plays are, at this day, objects of study in Poland, and the principal pieces are frequently performed upon the stage at Warsaw, Wilna, Cracow, and Leopol. The attainment of the English language is greatly facilitated in Poland, there being public chairs for teaching it in the universities. The stock of translated English literature, consisting of specimens from Shakespeare, Dryden, Milton, Pope, Thomson, continually receives accessions from the more modern English poets.*

I think the Poles are now more likely to advance under the guidance of English literature than they could under any other. That literature, by its spirit, is the fittest to become a model which every nation may safely follow, without prejudice

* In the course of the last year the following English works appeared in Polish translations; Sterne's Sentimental Journey, by Klokocki; Lord Byron's Bride of Abydos, by Count Ostrowski; his Corsair, and Sir Walter Scott's Lady of the Lake, both by Mr Sienkiewicz; Lay of the Last Minstrel, by Brodzinski; Wordsworth's "We are Seven," by Niemcewicz; Lord Byron's "Fare Thee Well," Campbell's Lochiel, and some other pieces of similar description, and select episodes from larger poems, accompanied frequently by aesthetical remarks concerning their individual merits.

in any way to its own national originality. Its spirit is not fettered by any rules prescribed by authority; it follows the highest of all authority—the law of nature. It does not school the thought, but expands its range as far as nature herself extends.

The Poles, notwithstanding their local vicinity to the Germans, and their being better acquainted with the German language than with the English, have never mounted on the soaring wings of the transcendental mystic literature of that thoughtful nation. They admire generally Lessing, Schiller, Wieland, and Goethe, and have made translations of some of their works. Some of them devote years of study to the philosophy of Kant, Fichte, and Schilling; yet the German theories cannot thrive on the Polish soil. The Poles were long ago known to be an active people, as Republicans generally are, and from the practical tone of their feelings, could not be expected to closet themselves up, like the German literati, disregarding practical utility, to indulge in the pensive moods of their ruminating and "unbusied" minds, or to dream over the non-existence of visible and palpable objects, which they knew to exist from the evidence of their five senses.

It is then not a mere unmeaning fashion which has led to the study of foreign languages in Poland. The Poles were in such political circum-

stances as to make the knowledge of them necessary. They, besides, were desirous of gratifying the incessant longings of their intellect, by acquiring them; and, as their own literature was inferior to those of the three aforesaid nations, they looked for substance and models wherever they expected to find the best. In future, too, they will resort to the French for models of versatility of mind and light wit; to the Germans for philosophy and high intellectual reveries; to the English for lofty poetry, and wise political and moral principles. Any nation having such great models before its eyes, cannot fail to advance in its march of progressive improvement. Constant study of the best productions make artists perfect, as far as perfection is attainable; this truth the Poles are now about to illustrate in the history of their literature and morals.

LETTER V.

Primitive Institutions for Learning in Poland—Erection of the University of Cracow—Its Prerogatives—Colleges of Jesuits—Reform of Education—Its Advantages—Present State of the Universities at Cracow, Wilna, Warsaw, and Leopol—Regulations of Gymnasia and Inferior Schools—Society of Friends of Science at Warsaw.

DEAR SIR,

IN my last, I have, in a desultory manner, adverted to the principal branches of learning in Poland, and touched on some celebrated names to whom they were chiefly indebted for their improvement and their lustre. The books which a people reads, and the languages which it cultivates, are the prime elements of its thought, or, at least, the chief impulses to the exercise of the mental faculties. This consideration induced me to trace historically the languages to which the Poles attached themselves; and from this attachment I grounded my inference respecting the general tone of Polish literature, and its probable tendency in future. In order more fully to illustrate the observations already made, and to fill up the chasms which I may have left, I shall now give

a short sketch of the history of our literary institutions, and of their internal regulations. From this you will form an idea of the means employed for promoting learning in Poland in former ages, as well as at the present time.

In Poland, as in other countries, the earliest establishments for education were the convents, and the professors were ecclesiastics. Learning at that time was not generally diffused; it was the exclusive profession of the clergy, who kept it to themselves with an aristocratic grasp; the only medium by which any portion of it reached the bulk of the people, was by the instruction given at church, and advices in temporal affairs.

The first religious order in Poland was that of the Benedictines in Tyniec, and the Cistertians in Miechow. One convent of the former order was founded on *Mount Bald*,* formerly the site of a temple consecrated to the worship of a heathen Deity. This convent is still in existence, and only a few friars inhabit its venerable walls. They

* This Mountain, called in Polish *Lysa Gora*, is still supposed to be the resort of witches; and is the same in Poland as Blocksberg in Germany. Mountains of the same appellation exist in great numbers throughout Poland and Russia. They were anciently, like the Helgafels amongst the Scandinavians, consecrated to the purposes of the Sclavonian idol-worship. Their names often occur in ancient songs and traditions.

seem to be the unperishing guardians of a spot which for ages immemorial has been hallowed to religion.

Education was at that time entirely monastic, and directed conformably to the views and spirit of the clergy. No layman had yet made a public profession of learning. Poland, as well as the rest of Europe, was then, like ancient Egypt, divided into the *caste* of the sword and that of books. All the religious orders that subsequently appeared pursued the old beaten path of their predecessors, and opposed all reform as dangerous and unhallowed innovation. In pursuing their duties, they acted mechanically, rather than with an expansion of mind; consequently, they left behind them no masterpieces of genius as ornaments of their activity. All the literary works that these ages can boast of are some meagre chronicles, and imperfect attempts at legislation. Yet, though religion conveyed but little intellectual cultivation, it cannot be denied to have been considerably beneficial to mankind, by affording political protection. An anathema of the church was a thunderbolt to those who became guilty of injustice or oppression, and whose exalted station placed them beyond the reach of any human law. Where excommunications wrought in full force, the people were earlier unchained from oppressive bondage; where their stroke was not dreaded, they were exposed

to endure wrongs unredressed, and remained longer in fetters. This is strikingly exemplified in the difference between the nations which professed the Roman religion and those who belonged to the Greek church.

Poland began to emerge from her rude state of political and moral existence at the end of the fourteenth century; when, after a period of incessant wars, the efforts of the nation were at last crowned with peace,—when laws calculated to promote the welfare of the people were enacted by Casimir the Great, and the erection of a university in Cracow was projected to accelerate civilization. After that period science came to be more varied, and more generally diffused. It was no longer partial, as it was when cultivated by the clergy alone, whose sole object was to promote a knowledge of the doctrines of Revelation. It now became divided into different branches, and spread its ample and benignant shade over all classes of the people. The teachers were no longer ecclesiastics, but learned laymen, experienced in the affairs of the world, and versed in the mysteries of nature. This improved mode of cultivating the sciences soon produced *Gregory* of *Sanok*, an open antagonist of the scholastic philosophy, who proposed the plan of beginning the education of youth by making them acquainted with poets and orators,—a bold scheme, but

perhaps not void of plausibility. At that period appeared *Rey* of *Naglowic*, who brought down philosophy from its high presumptuous elevation to homely life, enforced the practice of domestic virtues, and was the first who philosophized in his native tongue,—Janicki, distinguished in Latin poetry, who was created poet laureate by the Pope long before Casimir Sarbiewski, and died a premature death in the 28th year of his age,—John Kochanowski, who chaunted his mellow notes to the Polish lyre, while his brothers translated Virgil and Tasso, at a time when but few nations were acquainted with these masterpieces through the medium of translations. In short, there existed no branch of liberal and useful knowledge which was not, at that period, planted and firmly rooted in the Polish soil.

I cannot give you a more satisfactory idea of the changes produced at that period than by referring your attention to the University of Cracow, which is the source from whence they originated. The history of this university is also the history of the learning of Poland.* It has amply justified the high title it bears in ancient records, of the "*Alma Mater et Nutrix Polonorum.*" It was richly endowed by the liberality of Polish monarchs, and donations of private in-

* See Appendix, Note 7.

dividuals, and enjoyed great privileges. In consequence of the bull of Pope Urban V., whereby it was confirmed, and of its own eminence as a seat of learning, it occupied an equal rank with the other European universities. At its first establishment it had no chair of Divinity; this branch the Popes were not easily induced to grant, without due consideration, to the more remote universities. The political views of the Vatican made them wish the Catholic clergy to be educated in Italian or French universities, under their immediate superintendence, to obviate every tendency to schism. But at length even this important privilege was conferred on the university by Pope Boniface IX., in 1397. This grant, however, seems rather to have been the result of compulsion than of good will. The imperious circumstances were two: The recent conversion of the Lithuanians to Christianity, and the want of preachers to address the Neophytes in their native tongue, before whom Vladislaus Jagello was often seen uniting the office of an apostle to that of the monarch, in personally instructing them in the creed of the new faith; and, lastly, The fear that the religious tenets of Wickliff might, by gaining ground in Bohemia, endanger the orthodox Catholicism in Poland.

The fundamental laws of the university, as you will soon observe, were in such a spirit as to pro-

mote, in the most favourable manner, the progress of knowledge. I shall give you a few short specimens of the most characteristic, as they are recorded in the History of the University of Cracow, written by Mr Soltykowicz in 1810. Some of its statutes included privileges so advantageous, that, at a later period, several of its regulations have been adopted in more modern universities in Poland and Russia, and now constitute a part of their code of regulations.

The University of Cracow had this in common with all the other universities of Europe, that each faculty had the right of conferring on its students the degrees of *Batchelors*, *Magistri*, and *Doctores*, without requiring superior sanction. The same proceeding is still continued in the modern universities; the only difference is, that the title of Baccalaureate is now exchanged for the Candidature. The ancient University of Cracow had under its superintendence all the schools throughout the country. A similar regulation is still retained in Poland and Russia, the inferior schools being in both countries dependent on the universities. The schools which were founded by the university, and supplied by it with teachers, were called its *Coloniæ*, in like manner as they are now called Gymnasia, and District Schools. New professors were elected by a plurality of votes of the professors themselves, and the elected candidate was then

presented to the king for his royal confirmation. The same custom is still followed in all the Polish and Russian universities, with this difference, however, that the elected professors are now confirmed, not by the monarch himself, but by the Minister of State charged with the duty of superintending the public instruction and religion, who, in Russia, is at present Prince Galiczyn, and in Poland, Grabowski.

All the buildings belonging to the University of Cracow were exempt from taxes and every other burden. The auditories, like the temples among the Greeks, were held sacred and inviolable: A criminal who took refuge there was in safety, and could not be apprehended without the consent of the rector. All the graduated students were, in consequence of their degree, esteemed noblemen, *quoad personam;* and after twenty years, either of civil or military service, their noble rank became hereditary. On this point the same regulation has been adopted both in Poland and in Russia;—a measure which gives great encouragement to science, and undermines the empty pride of birth devoid of merit. The authority of the university was not limited to students enrolled in its *album*, whether natives or foreigners; but extended also over medical professors throughout the country, apothecaries, printers, bookbinders, painters, and even their apprentices. All these persons were

entirely subject to the rector's jurisdiction. He was invested with the power of exacting their oath of allegiance; without his warrant none of them could legally be arrested or punished. In civil cases, and even in some criminal cases of less importance, the rector's decision was irrevocable. The power of his sentence extended so far as to banish the delinquent from the town, and prohibit the inhabitants from receiving him into their houses, or countenancing him in society. He could denounce the anathema of the church against those who withheld the assessment due to the university, or in any way injured its revenue. The respect paid to the rector was in proportion to the extraordinary power with which he was invested. There are instances when (upon public occasions) he occupied the next place to the royal family, in like manner as the rector of the Sorbonne held precedence over the peers of France. The students, moreover, enjoyed this privilege that, in travelling *to* or *from* Cracow, they paid no toll for roads or bridges. In order to secure to the university the full enjoyment of these important prerogatives, four *Conservatores Privilegiorum* were nominated in 1429, whose office it was to guard them against any arbitrary encroachment.

It cannot be denied, that the particulars now enumerated, although I am far from considering them essential, since they refer only to external

forms, are sufficient proofs of the great regard paid in Poland to every thing that concerned learning,—of the care taken to remove every thing injurious to it,—and of the expedients contrived for promoting its progress. Under such favourable circumstances, it is no wonder that the University of Cracow became the nursery of so many enlightened men, some of whom became rectors, and even professors in foreign universities, and kept up a literary correspondence with the most learned men in Europe,—with Erasmus of Rotterdam,—with Luther—with Melanchthon—with Justus Lipsius, and others. Its renown attracted students from all quarters, from Bohemia, Hungary, Germany, and Sweden.* There existed Hungarian, German, and Swedish Bursaries. The Polish Bursaries, the number of which was great, and some large enough to provide for fifty students, facilitated the acquisition of knowledge even to students from the lower classes. The number of the students must have been considerable, since at one time there were upwards of 3000 scholars in those inferior schools in Cracow which depended on the University, and where the topics of instruction were confined to grammar, rhetoric, poetics, and dialectics.

At that time the zeal for learning seems to have

* See Appendix, Note 8.

been general in Poland, and literary accomplishments held in great honour. We find the highest offices in the kingdom occupied by learned men, chiefly graduates. Nicolas of Tenczyn, Grand Hetman, which is the highest military office in the kingdom, was a graduated Doctor of Philosophy in 1468. Peter Ianicki, a graduated bachelor in 1490, was afterwards made Chancellor of Poland, which is the highest civil dignity. In 1505, John Choinski, Vice-Chancellor; and in 1518, John Osiecki, Chancellor, were both graduated bachelors. Zbigniew Olesnicki was graduated A. M. and D. Ph. so early as the year 1406, subsequently Bishop of Cracow, and a Cardinal. Even the sons of reigning princes were ambitious of obtaining learned degrees. In 1417, Alexander, the son of Zemowit Duke of Masovia, thought it not beneath his high birth to be graduated in the University, and in 1422, even accepted of the rectorate. After all that has now been adverted to, I need not multiply instances by enumerating the different dignitaries of the church, senators, and many of the equestrian order, who were graduated in an institution which, being the acknowleged fountain of all polite learning, reflected a brilliant lustre on the individual distinguished by it.* The acquisition of these degrees was

* Itaque si aliquid elegantioris literaturæ in aliquo conspiciunt, Cracoviæ eum vulgo studuisse aiunt, nec quemquam

open to men of the lowest rank; they were the only paths for them to distinction, and to the highest offices in the kingdom. In this manner, Stanislaus Hosius, a graduated bachelor in 1521, advanced to the dignity of a Bishop of Warmia, and became a Cardinal. After him, Martin Cromer, the historian, in consequence of the same degree, obtained, in 1530, the same dignity of Bishop in Warmia; and in like manner a great many others of low birth were variously promoted to civil and military offices. Under the Jesuits, graduation fell into disuse; they were too intent upon intrigue to require from their students an accurate and complete course of studies. The practice, however, has been revived under the present organization of the universities, particularly those in Russia. Degrees are there the means by which persons of obscure birth can attain to distinction, and even to the rank of nobility. The nobles themselves are ambitious of acquiring degrees, as they pave the speediest way to honourable employments in the country, which are not always conferred upon mere birth. This is, indeed, an artificial incitement to learning, and rather seems at first to gratify vanity than to cherish

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solidam aliquam sapientiam habere pertendunt qui nunquam Academiam Cracoviensem viderit.—Bzovius in Propagine Hiac, C. xiii. p. 94.

a pure love of knowledge. Regulations of this kind cannot, however, fail to be of great advantage in a country which has been left behind in civilization, and which has the more need to rise proportionally in moral strength, in order to support its colossal structure, when elevated by rapid strides towards political importance.

At the time when the University of Cracow was on the decline, occasioned by domestic troubles and the forfeiture of its funds and privileges, the learned institutions of the Jesuits began to flourish, and interfere, by rivalship, still farther with the welfare of that ancient institution. The principal colleges of the Jesuits were in Posnania, Thorn, Leopol, Polock, Witebsk. They had besides a university in Wilna. The epoch of their ascendancy formed a period of about 200 years, from the end of the sixteenth century till towards the end of the eighteenth, when Pope Clement XIV., in concert with all the courts of Europe, abolished their order over the whole of Europe.

The epoch of their hierarchy affords the saddest aspect of learning and taste in Poland. Every branch of science was either neglected or deteriorated. By their artful machinations, the University of Cracow degenerated into a mere school of divinity. The nation soon became aware of the evil consequences of a monastic education. Some

enlightened nobles found themselves compelled to entrust the education of their children to foreigners superior in qualifications to their own countrymen, and their example was speedily followed by others, as a matter of fashion, where there was not the same power of discrimination in the choice of teachers. Poland, consequently, from one evil fell into a greater, and became the resort of foreign adventurers, both male and female, who, without possessing the knowledge necessary for instruction, imposed upon the credulity of the ignorant, and without sound principles, corrupted the morals of the people, blighting them in their very bud and developement. This evil arrived at its acme under Augustus III., and began to decline under the reign of Stanislaus Poniatowski, when the king and the better disposed part of the people united their efforts to oppose the further progress of these inveterate evils.

Never was reform more necessary than at that period, and never was the accomplishment of any reform forwarded by circumstances so favourable. The Jesuits, not satisfied with exerting their power over the consciences of men, extended it even over their earthly possessions; and in the progress of time, by employing the various engines of exaction the church put them in possession of, accumulated immense riches. Territories, as well as the valuable moveables, were heaped upon them

by the liberality of the Polish monarch, and by the religious devotion of wealthy individuals. These donations were conferred on their convents irredeemably. The descendants of the donators, after the expulsion of that order, had no legitimate right to reclaim them. Accordingly, the government was put at once in possession of their large property, and could have disposed of it at its own pleasure, as Joseph II. has done in Austria, and other monarchs in their respective countries, who thereby arbitrarily enriched their own finances. But the Polish government was too conscientious to follow examples so arbitrary, by making an illegitimate appropriation of estates so acquired; it respected the primitive purposes intended by the *Collators*, which were in their nature religious and moral. The Jesuits in Poland had occupied a double station, one in religion, the other in education. After they were discarded from both these offices, the Poles assigned the whole of their funds to the purpose of education, and made them a common good, in which the whole nation was at liberty to share.

From this praise-worthy destination of the forfeited estates, there resulted a peculiar organization of the literary establishments in Poland, which is without example. Out of these rich funds the government pays the yearly allowance to all the professors in the universities, as well as in the

gymnasia and high-schools; and instruction is given gratuitously to all without exception, and without any respect to their religious persuasion; even Tartars and Jews may, if they choose, equally participate in this national benefit. In consequence of this regulation, there is no country in Europe where learning is less monopolized by the rich than Poland; and nowhere have the poor so many advantages for acquiring knowledge and respectability by the cultivation of their talents.

For this liberal and beneficial arrangement of the system of education, which commences a new era so glorious in the literature and civilization of Poland, the Poles are indebted to the patriotic zeal and efforts of the Count Chreptowicz and of Konarski. The first moved this destination of the funds which had belonged to the Jesuits, and carried it through in the Diet in 1775; the other planned the foundation of the intended institutions, and directed the reform of education in all its literary and scientific branches. Each of them has a claim to the gratitude of the Poles, and of future generations. Count Chreptowicz, in particular, is entitled to his share, as he has saved for liberal purposes what would otherwise have become the prey of private avarice. The reform of education is one of the last bright actions of the Poles before their dismemberment, and lays no less a claim to our respect than their admirable

constitution of the 3d May 1791: It even surpasses the latter in its beneficial results. The dismemberment of their country has paralyzed the advantages which their constitution was calculated to effect; but, from the reform of education they derive, and will continue to derive, the greatest benefits; and future generations will long venerate the memory of their patriotic ancestors, whose wisdom procured them the enjoyment of such invaluable blessings.

In the first instance, the reform was begun in the Universities of Cracow and Wilna. Immediately new schools were established, the chief of which are, the Military School, Collegium Nobilium, and the Lyceum in Warsaw, besides many gymnasia and high-schools in different provincial towns. The professors, who had been formerly mostly of the clerical order, were gradually removed, and the laity intrusted with the office of instruction. Seminaries were founded at the universities for the express purpose of educating able teachers to fill the vacant places. These useful establishments are still in existence. In the want of duly qualified natives the chairs were supplied with foreigners, and the liberal rewards which were offered attracted learned men from all countries and nations. The liberality of the government to the learned extended still farther than their annual allowance. After having occupied their respective stations of

public employment a certain number of years, annuities were assigned them for life, as to put their declining years beyond the reach of care and want. In Wilna, and in all the Polish provinces belonging to Russia, twenty-five years of public service are required to establish a claim to this recompense, which is called *Emeritura*, and amounts to the full allowance which the incumbent had received during the last year of his public employment. In case that the health of the individual is impaired during his service, the emeritura is granted to him even before the expiration of the requisite term. In case of his death, his widow and children are entitled to a certain portion of this yearly income.

Having thus considered the literary institutions, and their advantageous points as they have appeared in Poland through succeeding centuries, I shall, in order to complete my sketch, add some details in illustration of the present condition of our universities and schools.

The University of Cracow, since its decline, has never been able to rise to its pristine eminence. It struggled long with the hostile attacks directed against it by the Jesuits; it suffered much in the Swedish wars and domestic troubles; and still more from the hands of the Austrians after the dismemberment of Poland. Austria, having not a

natural, but only an artificial Teutonic spirit, (for most of the nations composing her dominions are not of Germanic extraction,) pursues, nevertheless, the strange and difficult policy peculiar to her obstinate government, of Germanizing all the inhabitants subjected to her sceptre. As soon as Cracow became Austrian, the university was peopled with a colony of German professors. The chief object at which they aimed was to propagate every thing German, and thereby to second the views of the government of which they were the emissaries. The Poles, who had already but too much reason to be irritated against the Austrian government, were, by these illiberal proceedings, for ever alienated from the university. This untoward circumstance contributed to accelerate its decay. After the Congress of Vienna, Cracow became, in fact, a free town, and the university parted with her German professors; room was thus given to the natives for displaying more of the national spirit. But, after its previous losses, it is deprived of the fostering means necessary to its revival. This university, then, in its present state, exhibits the aspect of the decayed ruins of some ancient magnificent building, being, in fact, a mere shadow of its former splendour. John Sniadecki, who was educated at this university, specifies, in his "Account" of it, many of its regulations, which bear

a marked resemblance to those of the University of Oxford. *

Among the Polish universities that of Wilna is the best regulated; and the annual emoluments of the professors are the most considerable. One Lyceum at Krzemieniec, and eight gymnasia, namely, those of Wilna, Grodno, Mohilew, Witebsk, Minsk, Winnica, Zytomir, and Bialystok, are placed under its superintendence; besides a great many high-schools, called *Powiatowe*. The professors and teachers, paid by government in 1820, amounted to 433. The seminary for educating the clergy, at Wilna, has 15,000 silver roubles per annum, destined to its own uses. †

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* The University of Cracow has three professors of some eminence, Bandkie, author of an excellent History of Poland, in two volumes; Slotwinski, a lawyer; and Soltykiewicz, author of the History of the University of Cracow.

† The curator of this university is the Prince Adam Czartoryski, palatine. The rector is Twardowski. Its principal professors, who have also distinguished themselves by various literary productions, are, John Sniadecki, in Astronomy; Dr Andrew Sniadecki, his brother, in Chemistry. His excellent book on "Animal Organization," in two volumes, has been translated into German. Groddeck, one of the first philologists in Europe, author of several works on Greek and Latin literature; Dr Frank, and Becu, celebrated in Medicine; Capelli, in Law; Golanski, and Borowski, in the Belles Lettres; Lelewel and Onacewicz, in History; Jundzil, in Botany. This university has been lately de-

The University of Warsaw is but of recent date; it was founded by the Emperor Alexander in the first year of his reign in his new kingdom. His majesty wished that his footsteps into this country should be thus rendered signally glorious in the memory of his new subjects. This university is composed of five faculties or divisions: 1. Divinity; 2. Law and Administration; 3. Medicine; 4. Mathematics and Physical Science; and, 5. Literature and the Fine Arts. In 1821 there were no fewer than 42 professors and teachers attached to it, and paid by the government. For its support a yearly sum of 352,953 Polish florins is assigned. The sum total of its yearly revenue is 4,757,471 Polish florins, from which it has to supply allowances to schools depending upon it, and for other purposes, tending to promote, in various ways, literary knowledge over the whole country. *

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prived of the services of Mr Saunders, an Englishman, whose impaired health obliged him to resign his chair. He retired to Florence, where he now resides, eminent as an artist and man of letters. He was the Director of the Institution for Engraving at Wilna, and lectured on the History of the Fine Arts, and on English Literature.

* The most eminent professors, who also shine conspicuous as authors, are, Bendkowski, in Universal and Polish History; Bandkie, in Law; Skrodzki, in Physical Sciences; Ciampi, in Latin. The last is a native of Italy, and famous

There is a fourth university in Poland, at Leopol, in Austrian Galicia; but this, although situated in the heart of a Polish province, and among Polish inhabitants, cannot, with propriety, be called a Polish institution. All its professors are Germans, and the lectures are given in the German and Latin languages. The same inconvenience of a foreign language extends to the inferior schools in Galicia. The principal objects of study in the schools of that province are, Latin, German, and the "Everlasting Catechism," with a little mathematics, provided the scholars are able to understand the foreign jargon of their pedagogues.

Austria is the only European country where it might be said that little has been done for the interests of education, and her government appears decidedly averse to all improvement in this particular. Civilization has in that country become stationary or retrograde, while the north of Germany makes rapid advances. Nothing is allowed to be printed without undergoing the strictest *censure;* and the slightest liberal idea tending to innovation exposes both the author and the censor to prosecution. There is a strict prohibition

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for his various philological works: Jacobi, in Greek; Osinski, in Polish Literature. Linde, Rector of the Lyceum, is author of various historical researches on the Polish and Sclavonian Antiquities.

against the importation of foreign books, and against the natives sending their children to foreign universities, to give them an education more corresponding to the progress of civilization. Lately, when the Jesuits were expelled from Russia on account of the blighting influence which they exercised upon civilization, the Austrians received these exiles with open arms. At first they settled them at Tarnopol, where they established their own gymnasium, and from thence spread themselves and their principles all over Galicia. The well-known policy of this order has ever been to check the progressive developement of mind, and to propagate in its stead the gross mysticism of superstition, which so darkly enveloped Europe for ages preceding the Reformation. The present influence of the Jesuits in Galicia will probably be followed with the most pernicious consequences; and that province, which, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was the seat of learning, and produced more illustrious men than any other in Poland, will undoubtedly sink from the high rank it formerly held in the republic of letters into a state of comparative obscurity. In short, the system of education in that province is such, that no advantageous results can be looked for.

The organization of the Polish gymnasia is nearly the same as that of the German, particu-

larly of those in Prussia: yet the course of studies in Poland is more comprehensive. Some branches of knowledge, which, in Germany, form the object of study in the universities, enter into the prospectus of lessons of the Polish Gymnasia; for example, the Law of Nature and Nations, (*Jus Naturæ et Gentium,*) Political Economy, Natural Philosophy, along with its different branches, Botany and Zoology. The Mathematics, in particular, are cultivated to a high degree; and a scholar in a Gymnasium is made tolerably well acquainted with geometry, both theoretical and practical, with trigonometry, the geometry of solids, and algebra. The Germans themselves, on visiting the schools in Poland, acknowledged the superiority of her schools in Mathematics over theirs.* Other objects of study in these Gymnasia are, History, Geography, and Drawing. The languages taught are, Greek, Latin, French, and German; and in the Polish provinces belonging to Russia, the Russian also. With the elements of these studies the scholar must be tolerably well acquainted, and is bound to produce certificates of his proficiency before he can be admitted to attend the course of study in the university.

* Gedike, a well-known eminent scholar in Germany, in his Report of the Polish Schools, drawn up at the request of the Prussian Government.

Every thing in Poland is well calculated to promote learning among the higher classes. Its progress is in the most promising way; its future results more than certain. The lower classes, unfortunately, do not enjoy the advantage of being proportionally benefited by the learning requisite to their social condition. The parish schools are not sufficient to improve them in this respect; and the village schools, upon which their hopes chiefly rest, are not numerous. The extension of civilization will never be general unless these are multiplied.

In addition to these literary establishments, I may, finally, mention an institution of another nature, but which is closely connected with the former, namely, *The Society of Friends of Science* at Warsaw. Its origin might be referred to the reign of Stanislaus Poniatowski, when that excellent but ill-fated monarch soothed the misfortunes of his life with the healing balm of literary pastime, destining every Thursday evening to social conversation with men of learning. After the partition of Poland, when the name of that country was to be for ever obliterated, the same *literati* who were thus accustomed to hold these literary meetings with the king, actuated by patriotic feelings, united themselves into a society, for the object of rescuing from oblivion whatever related to the history and literature of the Polish nation.

The members have since exerted their powers in different departments of learning: and many literary productions originated, that have excited a deep and general interest over the nation. The Transactions of this Society are published under the title of *Annals*, and are now grown voluminous. The most active members of this society are, Count Ossolinski, Niemcewicz, John Sniadecki, and Linde, who might also be considered the first literary characters in Poland, at least their numerous and excellent works would seem to entitle them to that distinction.

Such is a general view of the literary institutions formed in Poland from the dawn of Christianity on to the present day. You have thus seen how far the liberality of the Polish monarchs extended in endowing them; and how far the whole nation took an active interest in their behalf. Even during the latest period, when the nation was in the most distressed circumstances, the Poles did not hesitate to sacrifice to the promotion of science the means which might perhaps have rescued their country, or, at least, prevented for a time its entire dissolution. Under Stanislaus Poniatowski, the last King of Poland, began a new glorious era of Polish literature. During Poland's non-existence, literature was cherished under the private patronage of the Princes Czartoryskis, who, being the scions of the Jagellonian

line, watched carefully over the vestal flame kindled by their royal ancestors. The period of Napoleon's conquest was short and transient—like the glare of a meteor, it shone but for a moment, producing only the coruscation of arms—it awakened enthusiasm and hope, but had little or no effect on literature. Alexander's wise and peaceful reign is the dawn of the brightest prospects, and spreads its illuminating beams over the horizon of a hopeful futurity.

LETTER VI.

Niemcewicz's Historical Songs—The Oldest Monuments of the Polish Language—The Golden Era of the Polish Literature —Its Authors—Era of its Decline—Retrospect and Art of Printing.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN ideas refuse to come we hunt for them. Such was my case—I was at a loss what to write to you. I went then to see a small collection of books relating to Poland, deposited, last year, in the Library of the Writers to the Signet, by Count Zamoyski, my countryman. This view of some folios, quartos, octavos, and duodecimos, in the Polish, Latin, French, and German languages, gave me a delight equal to that of an antiquary at the sight of some old black-letter books, or some broken fragments of an Etruscan vase. My mind awoke from its lethargy, and my thoughts expanded. In one instant I embraced centuries of intellectual wealth. I have now got rich in matter and in varied associations—richer than I require for a single letter. Out of this sudden and unexpected treasure, I shall select what I think chiefly

pertains to the literature of the Polish language; or, if you please, I shall give a cursory review of a Polish library.

The first book which I saw in the above collection, and one with which I have always been much delighted, was the *Historical Songs* of Niemcewicz. It is a book to which I do not know any parallel, and which is peculiar to the Polish literature. It was occasioned by the late situation of Poland; and, as no nation has ever been in such circumstances as that country, none of course could possess a similar literary production. The only nation somewhat resembling Poland in its fortunes, which at one time was agitated by similar patriotic feelings, though of inferior intensity, is the Scottish. Both nations cherish the memory of those kings who once swayed the national sceptre, and never pronounce but with reverence the names of the heroes who shed their blood for liberty and their country's glory. The songs, *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, in Scotland, and *Poland is not lost as long as we live*, in Poland, excite the same warm emotions, and the same enthusiastic feelings. The boon, when lost, became doubly dear to both nations. The Poles have reason, however, to brood over its loss with far more mournful recollections than the Scots. The wrongs sustained by the Poles were heavier, as hey rendered them strangers in their own coun-

try. Vistula's streams were the waters of Babylon to the daughters of Sarmatia.

The poets watched over the sensitive bosoms of their nation, and carefully fostered the burning flame of patriotism. Mr Niemcewicz, known in Poland no less by his patriotic zeal as a citizen than his excellence as a poet, partly to gratify the general feeling of his nation, partly to give vent to his own fervour, wrote the History of Poland in lyric poetry. The book is now in every body's hand, and its contents engraved on every heart. It is written with such amenity, that it has become a book of education; and in Poland you may frequently hear children recite, in their silver voices, the rhapsodies of Polish kings and Polish warriors: as, for instance, "The Angel's Visit to the Piast"—"The Sorrows of Queen Helena and her Royal Son"—"The Chivalrous Zawisza"—"Glinski the traitor," &c. No fitter contrivance has ever appeared for effectually extending the knowledge of history—for planting patriotic virtues in the innocent bosoms of the rising generation—and for making their love to their native land imperishable. These songs are set to music, and illustrated with plates, in order to render the historical events visible, and to impress them indelibly on the youthful memory.

The music to which the songs are set is by different composers. That of the "Ballad of

Zolkiewski," composed by a lady, is the most national, and its modulation is characterized by a heart-felt majestic simplicity. On the whole, it is remarkable, that the music composed by the ladies is by far the finest, and the ballads set to that music have become the most popular. I am at a loss to what to attribute this phenomenon, (since the superior talents of the male composers are acknowledged,) whether to the superiority of the natural or the patriotic feelings of that sex, or to both together.*

At the head of the Polish ballads, an ancient *Hymn to the Virgin* is prefixed. It is from the close of the tenth century, and is believed to be the oldest monument of the Polish language. The author is supposed to be St Adalbertus, Archbishop of Gnesno, the first apostle of Christianity to the heathen Prussians. This hymn is famous in the History of Poland. The Poles used to sing it going to battle—a custom which they derived from their heathen ancestors, and could not relinquish after their conversion. Thus the man of nature died in defence of his domestic hearth with a hymn of his own voice, as the man of society dies now at the deafening sound of the drum.

* The Polish ladies who composed the music are, Princess of Wirtemberg, born Princess Czartoryska; Countess Zamoyska, born Princess Czartoryska; Mrs Dembowska; Misses Bedayle, Paris, and Szymonowska.

Casimir Sarbiewski wrote a Latin version of that ancient hymn, with which you are probably acquainted, from the collection of his Latin poetry. It begins with *Diva per latas celebrata terras, &c.*

The second monument of the Polish language, but of an uncertain age, is the funeral "Coronach" of the heathen Prussians at the bier of their dead —beginning thus: "O lele! lele! Why wouldst thou die! Hadst thou nought to eat? nought to drink? Hadst thou not rosy-cheek'd maidens?"

A great many songs were lost in the lapse of the dark ages; fragments of them only are remembered by our chroniclers. To such belongs the

"O welcome our Lord!
O welcome our beloved!"

with which Casimir the monk was saluted by the people on his return to his paternal throne from the Abbey of Clugni in France, where he had long resided.

The ballad of the unhappy Ludgarda, commemorating how she was murdered by the orders of the King Przemyslaw, her husband, and how embracing his knees she entreated him not to kill her, but allow her to return home to her father, Duke of Cassubia, though it should be in a single shirt, *was*, as Dlugossus records, sung by the people in his time, that is, two hundred years after

the sad catastrophe had happened; now, it is entirely forgotten.

The same chronicler relates, that, on a certain day during the Lent season, he had witnessed the common people binding a bundle of straw or hemp, dressing it in human clothes, and then drowning it in a lake or in a river. On this occasion they used to sing,

> Death flutters round the hedges,
> Who is fond of sorrow, &c.

This custom, he conjectures, was in commemoration of the day on which, under Mieczyslaw, who first embraced Christianity, the idols of the heathen deities were broken and drowned.

These specimens may be augmented by different others, written in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They consist mostly of remnants of laws, the Church Liturgy, and translations from holy writ. The first translation of the Psalms appeared about the second half of the fourteenth century; it was made for the Queen Hedvige, who, by her marriage with Jagello Duke of Lithuania, converted him and the whole of Lithuania to Christianity But I am not inclined to detain your attention with these minute scraps. They are suited to afford entertainment rather to an antiquary than to a philosophical mind. Every thing that can gratify the latter was written in Latin. The whole period antece-

dent to the Reformation was unproductive and sterile, and the general turn of opinion led men's minds not to admire any literary productions so much as those of devotion.

Omni die
Dic Mariae,
Mea laudes anima;

Ejus festa,
Ejus gesta,
Cole devotissima.

Casimir, a prince of royal blood, pupil of Dlugossus, is held to be the author of these lines, the tenor of which is sufficient to give you the best idea of the literary productions, and of the national tendency of that period of prayers.

Polish vernacular literature, in all its departments, began to flourish in the course of the sixteenth century. This was also the age of the introduction of printing and of the Reformation. At the very outset of its infant career, it appears under very striking and rather unexpected features. The Polish language, which for centuries seems to have existed in a dormant and torpid state, appears at once in such correctness, elegance, and richness, as if it had been cultivated for many centuries; and, whilst the foreign languages of that period are visibly rugged and unsettled in their grammar, and are now seldom read, and not easily understood, the ancient Po-

lish is still worthy of being recommended to the study of any one who wishes to write the modern with more than usual skill and correctness. Hence, I am led to conjecture, that the Poles did not altogether neglect to cultivate their own language along with the Latin; and while the Latin was employed in schools and public transactions, the Polish must have been the language of domestic life, and of thought in retirement. It gradually gained new strength in silence, and only awaited an opportunity to appear in its polished structure; and this period was hastened by the Reformation and the art of printing; the first gave excitement for its display in thought, the other, the means of its promulgation. In this way alone we discover why the beginning of the Polish language was its maturity, and the cradle of the Polish literature its manhood. This period is styled, not without reason, the Augustan or the golden age of Polish literature. It is comprised within the reigns of Sigismund I. Sigismund Augustus, Stephen Batori, and Sigismund III., an interval of more than one hundred years.

Distinguished authors belonging to this epoch are Rey of Naglowic, John Kochanowski, Klonowicz, and Simonowicz. They excelled both in poetry and in prose, and conformably to the custom of those ages, wrote not only Polish but Latin also.

Rey of Naglowic is the earliest eminent author in the Polish language, who claims our attention. His prose writings are mostly of a philosophical cast, touching the most obvious and common affairs of human life; they are strictly moral in their subjects, and chaste in expression. His language has nothing of the rust of antiquity, it has only its pleasing simplicity, well adapted for expressing freely his unpretending flow of ideas. In short, he utters the profoundest conceptions in a plain and graceful manner, as if he had inherited from Xenophon the simplicity and elegance of his style; not unlike his language, the subjects of which he treats are in their nature similar to those of the Greek philosopher.

His poetry is of a moral and philosophic cast, though greatly differing from the simplicity of his prose writings. It is more than sententious—it is epigrammatic. An effort to produce effect always obtrudes itself on the mind of his readers. This augurs not quite so well in favour of his poetical talents, and he is really superior rather as a prose writer than as a poet. It cannot, however, be denied, that he possessed an admirable skill in compressing his moral sentiments into concise popular language, insomuch as to give them the pithiness of proverbs. Many adages like his are still current among the common people in Poland. It is uncertain whether they were in circulation

before his time, and he only embodied them in his poetry, or ought to be referred to his writings as the source of their origin. Whatever his merit may be as a poet, his merit as a national author is indisputable. Even his imperfections, the chief of which is prolixity, and sometimes trespasses against good taste, when weighed with his better qualities, are excusable, not unlike those of the English Chaucer, both being the earliest poets in their respective countries. To them the remark of Quintilian may with propriety be applied, "Interdum nitor et summa in excolendis operibus manus, magis videri potest temporibus, quam ipsis auctoribus defuisse."

Our author lived in independent circumstances —dependent only on the moods of his mind, which were various. At one time we see him translating the *Psalms* to gratify the old and the pious; at another giving *Models to the Courtiers*, to gratify the young and the giddy;—then tracing the *Struggle betwixt Virtue and Fortune*; or walking at ease in his *Park of the Nobles*. But by far his principal work is the *Mirror of the Honest Man*, which is also the mirror of the customs, opinions, feelings, and occupations of the Poles of that period at which he wrote. In his early youth he resided in the house of Tenczynski, Palatine of Sandomir. For it was formerly the custom for nobles of rank and influence to

keep numbers of young nobility about them to render their court more splendid. In the bustle of this grandee's court he acquired a tolerable knowledge of the world; and we see him during his subsequent life in good graces with a great part of the Polish nobility, and with the King Sigismund Augustus. He was not a miser, yet inclined to economy, which he also recommended to others in his writings. By the liberality of the king and of the nobles he became very wealthy, probably more so than any poet or professed author in Europe; for Rey's wealth was sufficient to found two towns, one of which he called *Reiowice*, from his own name, the other *Oksza*, from his family arms.

Contemporary with Rey was *Sebastian Klonowicz*, sometimes called *Acernus*, which is the translation of his Polish name, conformably to the custom of the learned men of that age, who adopted Greek and Latin translations for their names. He wrote Latin and Polish poetry; and, from his facility in composing verses, was surnamed the Sarmatian Ovid. The manner in which he declined this high appellation makes him perhaps the more deserving of it. Upon hearing it for the first time bestowed upon him, he is said to have instantly answered with this extemporaneous pentameter,

> Nasonis Sulmo patria est, Sulmircia nobis,
> Nosque poëtastri, Naso poëta fuit.

The accidental similarity of Sulmo and Sulmircia, birth-places of the poets, gives additional point to this pun. Of him it may be said, that "he lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." His poems are not numerous; and he does not seem to have been admired so much for their number, as for the readiness of his poetical effusions. The occurrences of common life were the subjects of his writings. In the management of them he was not at all times anxious to court the *gratiæ decentes;* and as soon as an opportunity was offered for the display of wit, he did not hesitate to sacrifice at the shrine of the humorous and satiric Comus—a propensity not likely to procure him friends. Even the titles of his poems evince on what subjects, and in what manner he wrote, as *The Boatman, or a Trip to Dantzig—The Purse of Judas Iscariot,* &c. He resided in Lublin, where he had an office in the town-council. The prodigality of his wife embittered his domestic happiness, and brought poverty into his house. He died at last in a parish hospital. Thus, you see a brother-poet of the wealthy Rey, though equally eminent for poetical talents, did not enjoy equal smiles of Fortune, but, like Belisarius, was reduced to the necessity of begging with an outstretched hand, *Date obolum.*

We now come to an author who was neither rich nor poor, who rejected honours, refused the

riches lavished upon him, and preferred living in a happy retirement, unknown to the public but by his contemplations. This was *John Kochanowski*, the most distinguished Polish author of that age. According to the custom of the Poles, he travelled in his youth to foreign countries. In Italy, he became familiarly acquainted with Vida, the Italian poet, and translated his *Poem on Chess;* in France with the famous Ronsard, whose poetry, though generally admired at that time, is now quite neglected by the French, and his language scarcely understood; whilst that of our poet is still relished for its purity and elegance. Even his antiquated expressions have a charm about them, like the moss and ivy on some majestic building. He happened to reside at Padua at the same time with several of his countrymen, afterwards distinguished for learning, namely, Lucas Gornicki, Patricius Nidecki, and John Zamoyski. The last was then invested with the dignity of a rector. In one of his elegies he pleasantly ridicules the pedantic and magisterial pomposity of the learned of that famous academy, in these words,

"Haec mihi barbatum memini dictare magistrum."

It would be difficult to enumerate his writings, and still more difficult to estimate their merits. In Latin, his three books of elegies are the principal ones. His Polish writings consist of origi-

nal pieces and translations. He first made the Poles acquainted with classical literature by means of translations from ancient authors, as Homer, Anacreon, and Aratus, in translating of whose Phenomena, he had Cicero for his predecessor. From the Latin he translated a number of the Odes of Horace. His translation of the Psalms into Polish verse has been equalled by none down to Karpinski, a living author. He was on all occasions attentive to the elegance and purity of his language—a caution which prompted him often to prefer imitating foreign originals to a close translation of them. His translations, of course, have not perhaps the boldness of the primitive models, but they have all the ease and amenity of original composition. His original Polish writings are also of a varied kind, chiefly suggested by circumstances which deeply impressed his mind. The homage of Albertus Duke of Prussia, vassal of Poland, gave birth to his poem entitled, *The Standard.* The king's going a hunting suggested to him *The Dryas*, or nymph of the woods, coming forth to welcome the royal hunter to her sylvan domains. Similar other public and private incidents gave rise to other poetical productions of various length and character. He sometimes indulged in ludicrous fictions Of this description is his *Battle of the Beard and Mustachios*, to which is added, a story of the origin of both. He was the author

of one of the first Polish dramas, the *Return of the Greek Ambassadors*, to which I have already alluded. But his principal poems, and in which his soul appears most unfettered and free in its soaring flight, are the three books of his *Trifles*, and of his *Threny* or *Laments*. In the *Trifles* he displays the moods of his mind as suggested by the different occurrences of his life. The critics of that time, guided by the classical models of taste, did not much approve of that excursive freedom, and strongly recommended their own practice of castigation, to which the author would not submit, stating, that what they considered as a failing he looked upon as "the very soul of his poetry." His "Laments" were occasioned by the premature death of his daughter Urszula. Finally, I must remark, that the life of this poet has been idealized in an excellent drama by Mr Niemcewicz. The scene in which his soul overflows, in one of his most beautiful "Laments," is the most affecting; and that in which the reapers, at the close of harvest, bring him the first fruits of the produce with song and with music, and he joins in the rural dance of his peasantry beneath the shade of a wide-spreading linden-tree adorning the middle of his court-yard, exhibits a most striking picture of the primitive Polish manners, which are too beautiful ever to be discontinued. No situation of life could have ap-

peared with more sublime features upon the stage than that of a pure moral being, who besides was endowed with mental powers of a rank so supereminent.

Besides our author, there were other three Kochanowskis, two of whom were his brothers. They deserve to be mentioned, not as original poets, but as good translators. George Kochanowski translated Virgil's Æneid, (1574,) and his version was esteemed the best before the appearance of that of Dmochowski. Peter Kochanowski wrote an elegant translation of Tasso's Jerusalem, (1618.) Lately some Polish specimens from the same poem were published by Albert Mier, which are remarkable for an exquisite polish of style. It is to be hoped that this elegant writer will, ere long, gratify the public with a translation of the whole poem.

To this epoch belong the three pastoral poets, Simonowicz, Zimorowicz, and Gawinski. The two first were born in Leopol, the last in Cracow, both places well known in Poland for the beauty of their scenery, so admirably adapted to descriptive and sentimental poetry, especially of the pastoral kind. This species of poetry is closely connected with the surrounding scenery, its principal charms being derived from those of external nature. No sylvan reed has ever been tuned in a place divested of the charms of nature. Theocri-

tus was surrounded by the mild beauties of Sicilian scenery, and Gesner by the grand features of Switzerland. Our three poets enjoyed similar advantages. They lived in the bosom of a picturesque swell of hills—within sight of the Carpathian mountains. From the sloping hill-sides they saw villages in the valleys, fruitful fields, spacious mirror-like lakes, meandering rivulets, swelling their "lingering notes of sylvan music." A landscape like this afforded them rich imagery, with which, during their hours of pensive musing, they associated their feelings and their fancies.

In this mysterious melting of nature with the inward workings of the soul, Simonowicz was the happiest—outstripping all his contemporary poets. Like the author of the Gentle Shepherd, being of humble birth, he knew nature, not by incidental visits, but by daily and familiar converse. Hence his descriptions appear genuine copies from her, and his feelings are as natural as if they had been the native effusions of his tender soul. His other two fellow poets knew nature more from books than from actual intercourse. Their ideas, therefore, have not the same correctness, nor the same easy flow; and both are, at times, deficient in elegance of language. With Zimorowicz this is particularly the case. He frankly owns himself to be only a humble imitator of Simonowicz, and, in his diffidence of succeeding, he declares

his "attempt vain to follow a high-soaring Bellerophon, being himself on foot." Simonowicz betrays, at times, traces of an imitation of the classics; but, even then, he does not entirely divest himself of his originality. Justus Lipsius, with whom he maintained a familiar correspondence, places him by the side of Catullus—a comparison to which the truth of his sentimental descriptions seems to have given occasion. His poetical talents soon gained him renown and the patronage of John Zamoyski, which he enjoyed to the close of his life, (1629.) His style surpasses that of John Kochanowski in graceful elegance, if not in purity, and, as an author, is entitled to an undisputed pre-eminence over every other prior to the appearance of the modern poet Krasicki. To enter into more particulars regarding him, I shall quote four lines from his epitaph. It implies more truth than might, perhaps, be suspected from their emphasis.

Simon Simonides situs est hic, cui bene credas
Congessisse Charin omnia mella sua,
Versibus hic rigidas ducebat montibus ornos,
Et dulcis suadæ fluxerat ore melos.

One uncommon merit of the pastorals of Zimorowicz and Gawinski consists in the descriptions which they contain of ancient customs. Passages of that kind are now the more precious, as they are become rare, furnish useful materials for histo-

ry, and afford much pleasure by their antiquity itself; for

——" We are drawn to the things departed,
And yearn to woo the relics of hoar Time."

Gawinski wrote likewise a great number of epigrams, which have all the correctness and point requisite in that species of writing. I shall here adduce three of them by way of example. The two first are historical epitaphs, the last is expressive of the unaffected feelings of a peasant at the plough.

" *The Bones on the Field of Battle.*

" Traveller! at the sight of these bones bleaching in the sun, and uncovered by earth, cease thy pity! Ours is a glorious grave: we are shrouded around in virtue, and entombed by the vault of Heaven."

" *The Soldier Slain for his Country.*

" For my country I fought: for my country I fell. The earth covers not my body, but my body the earth. Witness, O my land, the love I bear thee! I ne'er fled the foe when alive, and still guard thy frontier when dead."

" *The Ploughman and the Lark.*

" Thou singest, my sweet lark, and I too begin to plough. The dawn and the twilight find us

both at our labour—me at my plough, thee at thy song. God prosper, sweet songstress. Do thou also wish me success. 'Tis for me and for thee that I sow." *

Authors distinguished in Polish prose belonging to this period are numerous. The most part of them consisted of clergy, both Catholic and Protestant. The most eminent are Seclucian, Wujek, translators of the Bible. Birkowski and Skarga, famous preachers. Their language is a model of energy and purity, qualities which also

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* To gratify the curiosity of the reader, I subjoin the original as a specimen of the Polish language.

Kosci na poboiowisku.

Gosciu! co na tych polach widzisz kosci sila,
A ziemia ich swoiemi groby nie uczcila,
Nie lituy stond. I toc grób, dosc szlachetny bywa,
Kogo cnota oslania, a niebo przykrywa.

Zwloki Zolnierza.

Za oyczyzne w oyczyznie zabity sie walam,
Nie mnie ziemia, ia ziemie swém cialem przywalam.
Day swiadectwo oyczyzno, iako cie miluie,
Nie zbiegam, i po smierci twych granic pilnuie.

Oracz i Skowronek.

Juz spiewasz skowroneczku, iuz tez i ia orze,
Obudwu nas w robocie dwoie widzi zorze
Bóg pomóz skowroneczku, dodaway nadzieie,
I dla ciebie ia razem i dla siebie sieie.

adorn the original writings on various subjects of Gornicki, Sirenius, and Orzechowski.

The number of good works is augmented by some excellent Polish chronicles; for the *forte* of the Poles seems always to have been the writing of history. From his infancy, a Pole had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with it. Chronicles were often the elementary books from which the children of the nobility were taught to read; for, being Catholics, the reading of the Bible was prohibited to them. The subsequent public life of the Pole led him to appreciate historical events, and furnished various motives to consign them to writing, the chief of which was to gratify the general desire of his fellow citizens, eager to peruse the pages bright with the exploits of their ancestors. The most conspicuous chroniclers of this epoch, with the exception of a great number who wrote in Latin, are Bielski and Stryikowski. We may here add *Niesiecki*, a Jesuit, although he properly belongs to the next period. His *Heraldry* is an alphabetical chronicle, in whose bulky folio volumes private affairs are combined with public, insomuch, that the annals of the families of nobles become the annals of the whole country. No work shows in a more satisfactory manner how far the domestic life of the Poles was regulated by ambitious schemes, and none is so well calculated to gratify the vain

mind, as well as to please the more serious inquirer after instructive information.

The peculiar merit of the writers of the *golden age* is that of establishing the Polish language on a firm basis, in its grammar as well as in its construction. The modern Polish does not materially differ from the ancient; the difference consists only in the superior elegance and regularity of the modern, which is the fruit of elaborate care, and a reflection beaming from the refinement of the modern age. But its fundamental, bold, and free features are to be found only in ancient poets and prose writers. Original and translated works—religious, ascetic, and polemical writings—collections of statutes, which, since the reign of Sigismund Augustus, have been written in Polish, frequently offer precious stores for the study of an energetic eloquence.

From the middle of the seventeenth century to the expulsion of the Jesuits, which is an interval of upwards of one hundred years, Poland either was in a state of lethargic inaction, or the prey of hostile invasions and internal troubles. Heavy calamities cramped her civilization, and the Polish literature presents us only with religious legends, ascetic writings, heraldry, and panegyrics. The mind mostly dwelt on trifles, and mistook the aim of its activity. Neglect of science, superstition, and symptoms of a vitiated taste, daily gained

ground—the sad effects of a monastic education propagated by the Jesuits.

Within this period translations were made of a great many works of the ancient Latin classics, such as Seneca, Persius, Lucan, Claudian, Apulejus, Boëtius, and many others, without, however, a single specimen from any of the Greek authors. The principal translators, who were also minor original poets, are, Chroscinski, Twardowski, and Bardzinski. The best among them is Otwinowski, the translator of Ovid's Metamorphoses and Virgil's Georgics. But his life falls rather within the period of the preceding golden era. Notice was likewise taken of modern foreign literature, and translations made from different European languages, especially from the French, in consequence of a peculiar predilection of the Poles for it. The literature of that people was then in its zenith. All nations paid to it their homage. Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau, stretched over all Europe their intellectual empire.

In a somewhat more favourable light appears this period in the department of moral philosophy. Maximilian Fredo and Stanislaus Lubomirski, though living amid a general contagion, were not tainted by its corruption. Their rules of wisdom and prudence, pronounced in short sentences, on different concerns of human affairs, contain no less regulating substance in morals

than the Golden Rules of Pythagoras, or the Proverbs of Solomon; at least, in estimating them, they deserve to be ranked with no inferior sources of practical philosophy. They inculcate pure and sound principles of conduct, and have nothing of the corrupted court-maxims of Rochefoucault, and nothing of the precepts originating in prudential selfishness which the French moralist chose to display, in order to appear rather brilliant and dazzling, than just and profound. The ancient Polish writers were no secluded literati: they chiefly lived in *rerum actu*, and often stood at the helm of public affairs. Their principles are more worthy to be relied upon than those of the mere men of books or learned anchorets, whose lucubrations, from their secluded life, run a chance of being visionary. The wisdom of the former is the matured fruit of active life and long experience; and being drawn from the real character of the nation, it may also powerfully re-act on it "In their principles," says an eminent Polish writer, "they were not yet influenced by the empty speculations of modern philosophers. The thoughts of free men recurred to the free regions of Greece and Rome. They sought wisdom at its primitive, and probably its purest source. Loyal and active patriots in war and in peace, they were thoroughly acquainted with the moral condition and the moral wants of their country.

Their writings, therefore, are the most faithful exposers of the virtues and vices of our ancestors, in which we likewise participate, and which such various changes of our fortunes could not alter. Their works are the fruits of a native tree. They ought to be to our taste: they are qualified for imparting to us health and vigour."

I have thus conducted you along the different tracks in which the literature of the Poles aspired towards its growth. The ages prior to the Reformation contained nothing except fragments of popular songs, the liturgy, and the laws—venerable only on account of their antiquity. Already for a century before the Reformation Poland gave intimations of a powerful circulation of philosophical ideas, running parallel with the religious devotion of the nation. They were the harbingers of a brighter era, and had accelerated the approach of a golden age of Polish literature. The Reformation occasioned the most active stir of ideas. Already in 1440, we see the *Ars Moriendi*, a work of Mathias of Cracow, a Pole, appearing among the first specimens of printing in xylotypes.* Swatopelk Fiol, the first printer in Cracow, (1491,) and after him John Haller, gave currency to the literary labours of the Poles. Printing-offices were soon spread over the whole

* See Appendix, Note 9.

country in surprising number. We see them established in many small towns, where, at present, are only to be found the unlettered sons of Israel or peasant-like burghers. And, besides, many works of the Poles were printed in Venice, Basle, and Amsterdam. Such are the evidences of the superior civilization of Poland in former times, and also the proofs of its after-decline. The introduction of the Jesuits put a stop to the enlargement of ideas. Their order laid the foundation of an epoch sterile in literature and sad in political events.

LETTER VII.

Retrospect of the General Reform of Education—Libraries—Dictionaries of the Polish Language—Bibliographies—Mathematical, Physical, and Moral Sciences—Eloquence and Poetry—The Fine Arts—The Stage.

DEAR SIR,

THE reign of Stanislaus Poniatowski was destined to be the era when the eyes of the Poles should be opened to their political trespasses, as well as to their literary aberrations. It was a period of general reform; and, although the Poles failed in their political improvements, partly, perhaps, from the evils inherent in their civilization, but chiefly from the secret machinations of ambitious neighbouring princes, who sought in the spoils of Poland their own aggrandizement,—yet they were not so unsuccessful in abolishing the abuses of education. They thought, and, in my opinion, with reason, that all their disasters sprung from the depraved morals of the people. They, therefore, lost no time in correcting them. They began by emancipating the rising genera-

tion from the superintendence of the clergy, and committed them to the charge of the laity. Education, which formerly had been chiefly religious, became moral, without, however, ceasing to take religion for its basis. To judge of the value of such regulations by their effect would be to applaud them, as they have all that can be called good in their favour. In spite of the unfavourable position in which Poland, by her dismemberment, was then placed, we see that nothing was able to oppose her thorough regeneration with respect to morals. Sound principles struck root. Science and the arts, in all their various branches, began to flourish. In proportion to the gradual enlargement of ideas, the literary records increased. Thought and feeling, profundity and elegance, acted in unison to spread knowledge and to improve the general taste.

The first step which the Poles made towards improvement was to look back on what had already been done by their ancestors. Accordingly, large collections of books were made, in order to preserve the scattered remains of ancient lore. This was indispensably necessary, as the ancient Polish works began to be so very scarce, that of those which, in former ages, were common, scarcely any copies existed, and of others none at all. History, indeed, refers to many works, which have not yet come within the sight of our biblio-

graphers. Thus the words *injuria temporis perditum*, which are applied to many Greek and Latin works, is equally applicable to the Polish. The Poles had not only to endure the loss of provinces from the invasions of enemies, but also of their literary wealth. Savage foes, such as the Tartars, in the course of their inroads, consigned their libraries to the flames; the more civilized, such as the Swedes and Russians, carried them off to enrich their own collections. In consequence of this a great many scarce Polish books are now in Stockholm, and the whole library of Zaluski, at one time the largest in Poland, was, after the dismemberment of the country, carried to Petersburgh, where it now remains, of little use to the Russians, though it would be of great importance in Poland. No request for its restoration has, I believe, as yet been communicated to the Emperor. His Majesty's generous principles, and the great importance which he attaches to the promotion of universal knowledge in his dominions, are certain pledges that the addresses of his Polish subjects in this respect would be even gratifying to his feelings. The richest libraries now existing in Poland are those of Prince Czartoryski, in Pulawy; the library of the Society of Friends of Science, at Warsaw; and of Count Ossolinski, at Leopol, a donation lately bequeathed by him to that city.

After having collected the rich stores of their ancient literature, the Poles next directed their care to comprehend the spirit and riches of their language, and for ever to fix its rules. A copious grammar was compiled by Kopczynski, and a dictionary, in six quarto volumes, by Linde, in which the Polish language is compared with all the Sclavonic dialects—a work which, for erudition and extent, may be put by the side of the English Dictionary by Johnson, and of the German by Adelung. Another similar Polish Dictionary, but without the comparisons with the other Sclavonian dialects, is now preparing for publication by Professor Osinski. It is on a very extensive plan, and more voluminous than the preceding.

But such philological subjects, though precious and important to the natives, convey little interest, or, at least, very dry information to the general foreign reader. A more pleasing aspect for a philosophical mind is afforded by the history of the Polish literature. Different treatises existed anciently on that subject, written by Starowolski, John Petrici, Janocki, and others. They contained useful but too vague and too dispersed notices. Prince Czartoryski, an author distinguished by his various pursuits in science and literature, first gave a more regular and general outline of the Polish literature in his work entitled,

Thoughts on the Polish Authors. Bentkowski inquired farther into the facts; and having arranged them in a systematical order, brought them under one philosophical view in his "History of Polish Literature." This excellent production, which is still considered as merely elementary, has, besides, the merit of having awakened an active curiosity for such researches. Many have been published under the title of Supplements to it.* But by far the principal work upon this subject is Count Ossolinski's *Historico-Critical Notices on the Polish Authors.* Three volumes of it have already been published: the remainder will amount to twenty volumes or more—a work unequalled for profundity and extent, except, perhaps, by that of the German Bouterweck,—and in which the whole life of this personage was engaged—who is no less illustrious by his birth than for his learning and disinterested patriotic feelings. This work is dedicated to the Society of Friends of Science at Warsaw. I shall here transcribe a passage from his dedication, merely to give you a slight feature of the character of this distinguished author.

"You have made it your chief object," says he, "to cultivate your mother-tongue, to spread knowledge, and to add new glory to your native

* These publications are written by Chlendowski, Sobolewski and Styczynski.

land. For my part, I have, in the course of my life, felt an inward joy in following your generous enterprise: and, when the calamities of our country cast a mournful cloud over my soul, I sought and found a soothing solace for my grief as often as I transferred myself in thought to the ages past, and felt my soul in the vicinity of those illustrious shades whose feats in war were Poland's shield, and whose writings were her glory." Having then given a general view of his work, for which he had prepared all the necessary materials, he proceeds: "The infirmities of my advanced age, and perhaps death itself, may cut me short in the undertaking: indeed, it is not likely that I shall ever see its completion; but I have made such arrangements, that my native land shall not be disappointed in this my legacy."

Such noble efforts and such labour have been bestowed in Poland on philological and biographical researches. The whole life of the most ingenious men has often been engaged in these pursuits; no wonder, therefore, that they astonish by their voluminousness and erudition. I am far from laying much stress on the grammars, dictionaries, and bibliographies. They are not the things themselves, they are only their representatives; but such representatives, that, supposing all other Polish literary documents to perish, and Poland and the Polish language to be forgotten,

which is not likely,—should, however, these works outlive the general ruin, I do not doubt that, on seeing them, posterity would inquire, What is the language they are written in? what was the country to which they belonged? what were the illustrious names which made it glorious? Should no reply be given to any of these questions, would not a silent conviction spontaneously steal upon the mind of the inquirer, that a nation which spoke so rich a language, and on whose literature so many volumes had been written, must necessarily have been of great political importance, and must have occupied a high place in the scale of civilization. Such must be the impression at the first glance of these monuments of Polish literature.—Let us now inquire into the state of the exact sciences of this period.

The Poles are known to have ever been distinguished for their zeal in cultivating the mathematics. It is to this strong bias that they are indebted for their Vitelio, Copernicus, Martinus of Olkusz, and Sniadecki. Since the time of Brudzewski, (1430,) who might be considered as the founder of a school of mathematics,* on account of the great number of distinguished pupils he educated, and among the rest Copernicus, this kind of study was zealously promoted in Poland. Mathematical science suffered, indeed, a decline

* See Appendix, Note 10.

from its former celebrity in the schools of the Jesuits, that order being disposed to rule more by its influence over men's consciences than over their reason, which they intended to bewilder rather than to enlighten; but the study of it was again revived in the schools and universities after the reform of education had taken place.

Mathematics, like other sciences, were in Poland taught in Latin; and, even during the last epoch, the first elementary mathematical work, for the use of schools, was written in that language, by Mr Lhuiller. But the Poles were soon aware that the mother-tongue was the fittest medium for conveying this science. Owing to this fact, several mathematical works appeared in Polish. The technical foreign language, so perplexing to the comprehension of a Polish student, was exchanged for the vernacular, both in the mathematical and physical sciences. The new terminology was so skilfully contrived, that the Polish words were not strict translations of the technical, but rather a happy formation of terms, adapted to the things which they were meant to signify; so that both the terms and the things signified became at once intelligible, without any farther definition;—moreover, they expressed the meaning of the subject more exactly than the technical terminology, in which, as it is known, there is sometimes great looseness and inaccuracy. In this

manner the mathematical and physical department of the Polish language is as pure and national as if the sciences themselves had received their birth on Polish ground, and the Poles had never heard of the Greek or the Latin employed, which is the vehicle for conveying them among other nations. The uncommon pliability of the Polish language in the formation of words from the primitive roots, for every set of conceptions, made this an easy task. The most eminent mathematicians of the present period are Zaborowski, Czech, and John Sniadecki. The latter is the author of a work on *Algebra*, and of *Mathematico-Physical Geography*, which has lately been translated into Russian. Other mathematicians of some note are Polinski and Arminski. Abraham Stern, a learned Polish Jew, member of the Society of Friends of Science, is the inventor of a *Calculating Machine*, which, by means of wheels like those of a watch, performs its operations of the four common rules, and of the *fractions*, with perfect accuracy. He intended pursuing the same plan in order to make a machine for extracting the square and cube roots; but I cannot ascertain how far he succeeded in his ingenious and complicated scheme of rendering a part of mathematics a mere mechanical operation.

The mathematical and physical branches of study constitute at present the chief part of edu-

cation in the Polish schools—a regulation which, by its excess, is rather hurtful, as it is apt to divert the youth from their moral and literary pursuits.

Natural Philosophy is only theoretical in Poland, and as yet was little applied to practice. This must be the case in every country where manufactures are in an infant state, employing no machinery to which the application of physical laws is required. The proficiency of this science depends greatly upon observation and experience, and extends its range the more in proportion as it has occasion to be reduced to practice.

In this respect chemistry has been more fortunate. Applications of its principles are made in medicine; and in Poland it has a wide field for practice in agriculture, where different chemical experiments are daily made for obtaining various economical results. Oczapowski published lately an excellent work, in which he illustrates at some length the phenomena of chemical processes in agriculture. This established union betwixt the theory and the practice easily accounts for the Poles having much more valuable works on chemistry than on natural philosophy. The most distinguished chemists are Dr Sniadecki and Colonel Chodkiewicz, the former a learned man by profession, the latter from a love of science.

Poland, as an agricultural country, affords a wide field for agronomical studies. They may be considered as moral and physical. The *moral* part has for its subject the explanation of the relations subsisting among the landlord, (Seigneur,) the peasantry, and the Jews. These three classes act and react upon each other, both morally and physically, so as to influence the progress of agriculture. This kind of observations might as well be treated under the head of political economy, and they really constitute an important part of it; but I preferred separating them, as too minute for the principles of the system, being rather of too special a nature, and applicable to Poland alone. The *physical* part concerns the tillage and improvement of the soil, rural buildings, machinery, and the rearing of cattle. On both these branches numerous treatises exist in Poland. The authors of note, who have written their observations in a systematic form, are Lachnicki and Chocko, in moral concerns,—Reuter and Biernacki, in physical. Of all the foreign economists, Thaer's Principles of Agriculture are esteemed the most applicable to the Polish soil. The care bestowed for many years on the improvement of agriculture in Poland did not fail to place it on a very good footing. But every good has its concomitant evil. The quantity of produce and the want of a

corn trade are daily augmenting agricultural distress.

Botany has, for many centuries, been much cultivated in Poland. The fruitful soil and the extensive provinces of that ancient kingdom expanded the limits of the rich and variegated domains of Flora. Already, in the sixteenth century, we see laborious researches on that subject made by Sirenius and Urzendowski, subsequently augmented by those of Kluk. The series of Polish botanists is kept up by Jundzil and Schubert, the one a professor at Wilna, the other at Warsaw, both celebrated by various publications on that subject. Jundzil is particularly known by his *Flora Lithuanica*, and his writings on zoology and mineralogy.

The practice of medicine, which formerly was chiefly in the hands of foreigners, (German and French,) became within the last half of the eighteenth century the occupation of the natives. In consequence of the encouragements afforded by government, the knowledge of medicine spreads rapidly over the country. A good number of students are gratuitously maintained for this purpose, at the expence of the government. Pupils thus educated are bound, in their turn, to perform during six years the duties of surgeons in the army, their full pay, however, and other usual emoluments, being secured to them. After the ex-

piration of this time, they are free from any farther obligation. The University of Wilna is the most celebrated for medicine. The time of study required for graduation was formerly six years, and has been lately augmented to seven. The same regulation is extended to all the universities in Russia. Such is the importance attached to the education of those upon whom the health and the lives of their fellow-creatures depend. No individual graduated in a foreign university is allowed to practise in Russia and in Poland, before undergoing an examination at some one of their universities, and receiving a diploma from the faculty.

The moral sciences alone have not made the progress that might be wished for. The cause seems not to lie in any want of love and exertion, for these have not been wanting, but in the very nature of moral objects, the study of which, in its progressive march, encounters more difficulties and impediments than any other science founded on observation and experience.

With respect to *divinity*, different improvements are going on for the promotion of it. Seminaries are erected for the education of young divines. The students, besides their professional studies, are bound to be acquainted with their subsidiary branches, as Latin, Greek, and now even Oriental literature. Traces of the bigotry im-

planted by the Jesuits and their pupils, disappear both from among the theologians and the people; sound and purer religious principles are daily gaining ground. Poland has always been known as a country distinguished for its religious toleration: this spirit is prevalent at present, and extends equally to Russia. All men, of whatever Christian persuasion, are, in the eye of the law, equal. Those of other religions, as the Tartars and Jews, enjoy the free exercise of their worship and the full protection of the law.

In Poland, as in all Catholic countries, moral philosophy was closely wedded to religion. Protestant countries alone have produced eminent moral philosophers, who developed their principles independently of religion. The works of the Stagyrite were long the sole manual of moral subjects discussed by the Polish learned. The sound philosophical views of Gregory of Sanok, (1440,) whom I have mentioned elsewhere, did not prevail in Poland. His writings, though generally admired, were not numerous, and their contents could not be so easily disseminated, as he lived before the era of printing. The name of Aristotle continued to resound from every chair of philosophy. The translation of his works into Polish by Petrici, and the tasteful commentaries on his politics and ethics, furnished all that was necessary for establishing his authority, both among

the schoolmen and the laity. The same doctrines were propagated by the Jesuits during their learned hierarchy in Poland, with the application of the acute rules of his logic to the support of religious tenets. It is only in our days that the authority of Aristotle has lost its hold of the mind in philosophy, as that of the saints in matters of religion. The Poles, however, have not reaped any signal advantage from this change, as even yet they have no directing authority in moral science; and their philosophy presents a confused aspect, either inclining to the eccentricities of the Germans, or the materialism of the French. This is not the effect of public instruction, but of private promiscuous study. The lectures upon this subject were never rendered so popular as to pervade the bulk of the nation, and determine its opinion and belief. The most noted philosopher who has lately appeared among the Poles is Abicht, professor at Wilna; but being a German by birth, he wrote and delivered his lectures in Latin. His principles, therefore, could not strike so deep a root as they would have done had they been delivered in the language of the natives. Every nation desirous of propagating philosophical ideas amongst its citizens must philosophize in its own language. This is the path followed by all nations which have acquired philosophical renown. The Poles ought to avail themselves

of the hints afforded them by these historical facts, and develope their ideas in their own language, with the view to attain the renown of possessing a national philosophy, like the French, the Germans, and the Scottish. Of all philosophers the Scottish come the nearest to human concerns, and should also be the nearest to human bosoms. By keeping the middle line betwixt the experience and the doctrines of "*pure reason*," they fall into none of the extremes of the French and the Germans. In their high aspirations they follow nature in her mysterious workings as far as the human faculties are able to follow her, and then prostrate themselves in adoration before the invisible throne to which nature is linked. They consider the affairs of man with similar concern as Socrates, who is said to have brought down philosophy from heaven,—nay, they do more, they leave to heaven what exclusively belongs to heaven, and concern themselves only with what is conducive to the happiness of the human race. In Scotland the soul does not shrink at philosophy as at something contagious, which, in the opinion of the people, either makes its pupils lost to heaven by raising doubts, or renders them useless to the world by its eccentricities. On the contrary, it is admirably adapted to the sound instruction of young people, as it enlightens their minds and purifies their hearts. The Scottish school of phi-

losophy has ever been distinguished for sound moral principles, and practical wisdom. The writings of Reid, Smith, Kames, Stewart, and Brown, are evident proofs of it. They unite depth of thought with simplicity and elegance of speech—are intelligible and popular—qualities in which they excel most other philosophers, and which are best calculated to propagate the principles they teach. Their tenets are commendable as well as their method, and the Poles, in developing their moral thoughts, can never follow any models more sound than theirs,—which are no less philosophical than religious—no less profound than chaste and sober. Among the Poles, John Sniadecki is the only author whose writings make some approaches to these models. In his inquiries on the subject of philosophy and literature, he combines the precision of a mathematician in his deductions, with the acuteness of a man of the world in his observations, delivering his thoughts in a style at once nervous, pure, and elegant. Brodzinski's writings excel in the same qualities of language. Their subjects are mostly literary; they, however, often touch on the regions of philosophy. But a strictly metaphysical book, in which metaphysics are reduced to a regular system, is that of Iaronski. His disquisitions on the nature of mind are entitled to a great share of consideration. They claim it, however,

more from the novelty of the attempt than from the originality of his views. The author adhered too closely to the system of a well known German philosopher; in so much, that he even disfigured the Polish language by translating literally the German terminology. Szaniawski, in tracing the *systems of the ancient philosophers*, combined justness of views with purity of expression. Yet it may be said, after all, that moral philosophy is still in its infancy in Poland.

Its more practical branch, Political Economy, has there been more cultivated, where it several years since became a particular object of study. Its fundamental principles were developed upon the basis of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations." On his Theory public lectures were delivered in the University of Wilna. The Theory was afterwards more fully elucidated, in its application to Poland and Russia, by the Senator Stroynowski. The work of the latter has been lately translated into Russian; and on account of the sound views displayed in it may be placed by the side of Storch. Of all the branches of moral science *this* has made the greatest progress in Poland. The principles of Say and Ricardo are much in vogue.

Law, in Poland, exhibits the most heterogeneous chaos. Formerly the Poles were governed by Statutes and *Constitutions*, sanctioned by the suffrages of the whole nation, in a General Diet. In

Lithuania the Code of Leo Sapieha prevailed, and still has in that province a regulative power. The Polish towns were originally governed by the adopted *Jus Magdeburgense*. Since the partition of that country, the law has become a compound of the Prussian Landrecht, Imperial Ukases, Austrian Law, the Code Napoleon, and the ancient and the new Polish Constitutions. There can be no attraction in such a chaos—the study of it would be depressing to any human mind. Thus, it may be said with reason, that Poland, during the last thirty years, has exhibited a wilder anarchy than during the two consecutive centuries in which she was governed by her elective kings. The Roman civil and criminal law is studied in the universities; likewise the Law of Nature and of Nations, both of great utility to the Polish student, as they are the fittest subjects for conveying theoretical and practical ideas of law, and for guiding him amidst the deluge of confusion.

Universal History, on which Bentkowski at Warsaw, and Lelewel at Wilna, deliver their philosophical views, and the numerous and excellent works on national history, the study of which occupies the Poles in private reading, complete the whole cycle of the moral sciences, and of moral education in Poland.

Polish historical literature can boast of some

valuable statistical accounts. Swiencki, in his Geography of Ancient Poland, gave an accurate information of the sources of the national wealth of the Poles, and of their political and commercial relations subsisting with different European countries. Surowiecki, in his History of the Polish Towns and Peasantry, gave a chronological view of manufactories and trade, and pointed out the causes of the gradual decline of these two classes of society. Lately, Count Raczynski presented the public with a Statistical Account of Podolia and Ukraine. It is a splendid publication, adorned with plates, to which is annexed, his Journey to the Plains of Troy, with a topographical description of them.

Eloquence, as is the case under all free and popular governments, has always flourished in Poland. Since the fifteenth century, it has been furthered by instructions given in the universities; and its most distinguished professors were Gorski, Herberst, and Marycki. Their disquisitions appear to have been founded chiefly on the writings of Demosthenes and Cicero, conjoined with the dialectics of Aristotle.* But eloquence in Poland was not a mere dead letter consigned to books and schools: It was a living breath of active life which pervaded all ranks of the nation. Most of the

* See Appendix, Note 11.

elective kings possessed this gift; and often exerted it skilfully in controlling the turbulent effervescence of freedom. We frequently see Polish chiefs addressing the army, and, by means of their oratorial powers, checking mutinies, and diverting the rebellious impulse into the channel of military enthusiasm. Tarnowski, Zolkiewski, and Chodkiewicz, were equally eminent as chieftains and as eloquent speakers. Polish history is full of speeches of their kings, generals, and statesmen,—derives from them its principal beauty, and almost antique dignity, so much admired in Xenophon and Livy. The period immediately previous to the partition of Poland, during which all the energies of the people were aroused, is also distinguished for genuine eloquence in the diets. King Stanislaus took the lead; and Ignatius Potocki, Kollontay, and Czacki, were equally conspicuous as statesmen and as orators. In Poland this accomplishment seems to have always been the result of practice and habit, assisted by the reading of classic models, rather than the fruit of precept; for books on that subject are few in number, and of comparative little value. It is only since the partition, when the Poles were deprived of the advantage of public speaking, and even controlled in expressing their sentiments on public affairs in familiar conversation, that regard has been paid to the rules and theory of eloquence. During such unfortunate inter-

vals there is room for Quintilians to appear. When the free breath is stifled there is place only for the rules of speech. In this time Count Stanislaus Potocki wrote his four volumes "On Eloquence," and made also a practical display of the sound principles which they contained, in his elegant work entitled "The Eulogies of celebrated Poles," and particularly of those who fell victims in defence of their country's violated rights. A cenotaphical monument at Villanow, anciently a country seat of King John Sobieski, is engraven with the names of those magnanimous dead.

From the end of the fifteenth century till the present time poetry has been taught publicly in universities, and its professors, who, at the same time, were eminent poets, were Paul of Krosno, Eckius, Agricola, and Sarbiewski. More recently, various attempts have been made for elucidating philosophically its theory, but as yet they are far from being satisfactory. Krasicki's treatise on this subject is mostly historical, dwelling rather on the principles of Aristotle and of the French school, than exhibiting new philosophical views, more conformable to nature. Dmochowski, in his "Poem on Poetry," adheres very closely to Horace's "Ars Poetica," and not unlike Boileau and Pope, is, upon the whole, his worthy follower. His observations relating to Polish poetry are acute and just. Slowacki endeavoured to give an

outline of the Belles Lettres in the manner of Blair; but it is rather short and imperfect, and esteemed more for elegance of style than depth of thought. A great deal is now expected from Osinski. His lectures on this subject are delivered with uncommon eloquence, and are attended not only by the regular students, but by numbers of polite society, ladies not excepted. But in his system he attends to the French models; that is to say, he is more friendly to classical than to romantic literature. In England, you would perhaps call him a follower of Pope, in contradistinction to the Lake school. His remarks, however, on the Polish poetry, which is neither strictly classical nor decidedly romantic, but has a peculiar character of its own, may be expected to have much weight, and seem accordingly to be fully appreciated. Brodzinski, in a treatise, has, in the most satisfactory manner, illustrated the nature of classical and romantic literature, and the relation in which Polish poetry stands to each of them respectively.

The fine arts, likewise, have not been neglected in Poland. The government encourages them equally with science and literature. At Warsaw, there is every year an exhibition of paintings and engravings, and the government awards prizes Wilna contains a public school of painting and engraving, where several pupils are maintained at

the expence of the government. The first is under the direction of Rustem, a Pole, the other was, till within these few years, under that of Mr Saunders, an Englishman. Poland can boast of having possessed two first-rate painters, Czechowicz and Smuglewicz, both educated in Italy, at the fountain of the fine arts. The paintings of the latter adorn the Cathedral of Wilna; several of them are to be found in the churches at Warsaw, also in St Petersburgh, whither he had been invited by the Emperor Paul. He excelled in strong original conceptions. His subjects are for the most part religious, taken from the Bible, like those of the English West. Some few of them are historical. The Assassination of St Stanislaus, the tutelary saint of Poland, by King Boleslaus the Bold, and his Cain and Abel, are masterpieces of art, and much admired by connoisseurs.

Music is in a flourishing state, and much care is bestowed on it, both in private and in public. Warsaw contains a numerous society of amateurs for the cultivation of church-music. The best of the professional composers are Kurpinski, and the two Lessels, father and son. The latter, in consideration of his talents, has lately been invested with nobility by the Emperor. Lipinski is well known as an eminent performer on the violin. His successful and well attended concerts in Leopol, Vienna, and Warsaw, are sufficient proofs of

his skill and public estimation. I feel I have the right of adding to these a naturalized citizen of Edinburgh, Mr Yaniewicz, a Pole by birth, who, by having gained, in this his adopted country, so much real esteem and applause, cannot but reflect a pleasing light on his native land, which makes a Pole remember his name with endearment, and a degree of national pride.

The theatre is equally under the patronage of the government. The Dramatic School educates aspirants for the stage. At its head stands Osinski, the same of whom I have spoken as lecturer on Polish literature in the University. Among the actors the most conspicuous are Kudlicz in tragedy, and Ziolkowski in comedy, both authors of different dramatic pieces. Among the actresses Mrs Leduchowska and Miss Nacewicz hold the highest rank. The first is particularly applauded in the part of Lady Macbeth. Boguslawski, once their fellow-actor, is now publishing his dramatic works in twelve volumes, which will, no doubt, be gratifying to the public, as they have for a long time afforded them a great delight upon the stage. He might be called the Kemble of Poland, and like him, now lives in retirement.

But I am afraid of entering too minutely into particulars. These, however, I think, were such as to convey you a more precise idea of what is going on in that part of Europe, than mere gene-

ral observations arranged in any other form would have done. You are now acquainted with the state of science and the arts in Poland; there still remains for your consideration her polite literature of the present day. But this I must reserve for some future communication.

LETTER VIII.

Modern Polish Poetry—Eminent Modern Poets—Dramatic Literature and its Writers—Causes of the Multiplicity of Writers in Poland—The Patronage—Polish Female Authors—Conclusion.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE somewhere made the remark, that modern Polish poetry is historical and elegiac, its subject being the commemoration of the past. For the same reason, it may as well be called the sentimental, a designation which Schiller confers on that species of poetry, or the romantic, as it is called by Schlegel. Both appellations are equally appropriate, since the one implies feeling the other enthusiasm, the very qualities which characterise Polish poetry. Specimens of what Schiller calls *naïve* poetry, which presents itself to the mind like a Grecian statue, rather than a painting, and works more outward than inward, may frequently be found in our traditional poetry, and especially in the songs of the Cracovian peasantry. Such specimens are rather scarce in the works of the cultivated poets. Out of their great

number, I can adduce but three authors who may be said to have been occasionally *naïve*, namely, Karpinski in his Laura and Filon, an amorous dialogue; Kniaznin in his Krosienka, when a country maid sitting at her loom betrays her love with a most unconscious simplicity; and Krasicki in several of his fables. This quality of his fables makes them so popular and so pleasing, that old and young know them by heart, and, on hearing their simple-told moral truths, old and young cannot forbear smiling. All naïve poetry is an indisputable test of genius; and, in fact, the authors now mentioned as the most naïve are also the most original, and in those qualities which constitute a true poet surpass all others. This excellence of poetry cannot be attained by art. It is like the happy εὑρηκα of a mathematician, the offspring of accident, rather than of labour. It is the revealed creation of a moment, like the Phidian statue of Jupiter, from the accidental hearing of Homer's lines,

Ἦ καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων·
Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον. *

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* He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows;
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod;
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the God:
High Heav'n, with trembling, the dread signal took,
And all Olympus to the centre shook.—*Pope.*

In Poland a general tendency to poetical enthusiasm, and to the endearments of poetry, seems to pervade the whole nation. The nobles, who are numerous, lead a life of ease. The productive soil of their estates precludes all fear of want, and provides them with luxuries. Though their lives are apparently inactive, their minds cannot be so: their mental vigour must either prey upon itself, or receive nourishment from without. They, therefore, either indulge in reveries of their own, or cherish those of others. Among a people of these dispositions, who, besides, are known for their lively imaginations and ready enthusiastic feelings, there must be poets, and Mecænases of poets. Study and means are both necessary to acquire learning; but poetry is a ready gift of inspiration. Its sources are feeling and imagination, which are natural endowments, common in a greater or less degree to all human beings. The high and the low, the learned and the unlearned, have their poetical moments. Accordingly, even our peasantry, and particularly those around Cracow and in Ukraine, are distinguished for their extemporaneous poetical flights. Hence it may be said, that in Poland,

Docti, indoctique scribimus poëmata passim.

In the "Dictionary of the Polish Poets," published in 1820 by Juszynski, the lives of upwards

of 1400 are described, including true poets, versifiers, poetasters, scribblers, and those

> —— Whom Phœbus, in his ire,
> Hath blasted with poetic fire.

And yet his Dictionary is not completed; it comprises only the poets anterior to the reign of Stanislaus Poniatowski.

In surveying the Polish poetry of the present day, I shall not detain you with the minor poets, such as Minasowicz, Szymanowski, Wengierski, Tanski, Dmochowski, Molski, Tomaszewski, though I may, perhaps, be challenged for calling them minor poets, since the posthumous works of some of them are deeply impressed on the memories of the Poles, and will long be perused with universal delight; nor am I willing to enlarge upon the merits of modern poets, such as Okraszewski, Tymowski, Mickiewicz, Szydlowski, who being eager votaries of the Muses, have already gained much admiration, but whose promising fame is as yet in the bosom of futurity. I shall only advert to those who, on the ground of their contemplations, occupy the highest station, and whose works might be considered an ornament of the literature of any country. These are, Naruszewicz, Krasicki, Kniaznin, Trembecki, Karpinski, Niemcewicz, and Brodzinski. Each of these has pursued his own peculiar path: their works,

therefore, according to their distinctive characters, deserve to be separately considered.

The most eminent poet of later times is *Krasicki*, Bishop of Warmia. His ecclesiastical avocations, as the head of the church, did not in any way incapacitate him for the exercise of his poetical powers; nor does any thing occur in his writings savouring of professional cant. He lived at the time when Frederick II. King of Prussia, equally great as a warrior and philosopher, was surrounded by the first wits of that age. The superior talents of the Polish poet could not pass unnoticed by that monarch. He was invited to his court, and there he became a member of that learned association, and one of the monarch's favourites.*

Krasicki may be called the Voltaire of Poland; his cast of mind and his writings much resemble those of the French philosopher. Voltaire attacked religion and the clergy in France; Kra-

* In one of their conversations the King had with him, the monarch remarked, in a jocular way, that, as Bishop, he might facilitate for him the entrance to Heaven; and, in case of great need, which he had good reasons to apprehend, conceal him under his gown. "Sire, I would readily do you this service, but your Majesty has of late cut my gown too short." This was intended as a hit at the confiscation of the church lands, which had diminished the Bishop's revenue. The King smiled at the repartee, and accompanied his smile with a valuable present to the Bishop.

sicki revered religion, but though himself one of the clergy, was the scourge of the abuses and selfish views of the priesthood. In his poem *Monachomachia*, or the War of the Monks, he represents the bigotry and ignorance of the monastic orders in a most ludicrous manner. His pleasantry gave rise to a considerable displeasure; in so much that, to appease irascible minds, he thought it advisable to write an *Anti-Monachomachia*, a recantation of what he had advanced in the former. The first poem was occasioned by the following circumstance: At one time, when Krasicki came to Sans-Souci, Frederick the Great assigned to him the same apartment which Voltaire usually occupied, remarking, at the same time, "Bishop, in a place such as this you ought to be inspired." The implied injunction was in fact realized, and the fruit of the inspiration was the aforesaid poem, in six cantos, so congenial to the writings of Voltaire,—being in nothing inferior to the Pulpit of Boileau; it seems even to surpass it in light wit, and playfulness of fancy. In his *Satires* he is likewise a match for Boileau. He has not produced such a variety of them; but those which exist bear the stamp of uncommon genius. He displays in them a profound knowledge of human nature, and all the stratagems for assailing vicious propensities. In writing these he followed a plan of his own. The

ancient as well as the modern satirists, Boileau not excepted, were mostly personal; if they did not openly attack individuals, they pointed them out as cognizable by very distinct and palpable allusions. Krasicki's satires are free from either of these faults. His shafts are directed against national, not individual foibles. His *dramatis personæ* are fictitious, but his sting strikes its designed mark. From his own words we may best conceive the principles which he has followed. "The satire," says he, "tells truth—it abjures all personal concern—it honours the government—reveres the king—but judges the *Man*."

The same path he seems to have pursued in his *Myszeis*, a tragicomical poem, in ten cantos, representing a war between the Mice and the Cats. The Mice obtain the victory; in consequence of which Popiel, a dissolute Polish monarch, a sort of Sarmatian Sardanapalus, and his supposed ministers the Cats, are devoured by the Mice. The subject is founded on the fabulous history of Poland. The whole composition hinges on national usages and prejudices; and is a delightful creation of a sprightly and fertile fancy. Homer's Batrachomyomachia is the only known production of a similar nature. The scene is an island in the lake of Goplo, near Kruswica, the most ancient capital of Poland—in short, what Scone is in Scotland.

Of Krasicki, as a superior *Fabulist*, I have already spoken. His biographer remarks, that, "had he left nothing of his pen but his satires and fables, he would have been sufficiently entitled to claim the first rank among the Polish poets." His *Journey to Bilgoray* and his *Poetical Letters*, both consisting of a mixture of prose and verse, might be considered as models in this kind of easy and delightful poetical excursions, so well fitted to create a general interest. The *War of Chocim* is his only poem on a serious theme. It has for its subject the several victories obtained over the Turks by the Poles, under the conduct of their famous leader Chodkiewicz. It is, like Lucan's Pharsalia, a noble and affecting historical poem. Yet, after all, it must be allowed that the bent of Krasicki's imagination was not of a serious cast. His serious efforts were only secondary, and subordinate to his humour and wit.

He is also the author of three novels, if they may be so called; since, notwithstanding the form of novels, and their light and engaging mode of narrative, they appear too strictly connected with history and reality, which may perhaps exclude them from the rank of fictitious compositions. In his *Doswiadczynski* he describes the life of a Polish nobleman, exposing him to different adventures in his own country, and on his travels abroad,—draws a faithful picture of the

ancient system of education in Poland,—of the intrigues in the diets and judicature, frequently contrasted with proceedings of a similar nature in foreign countries. In his *Podstoli* (the Sewer) he gives a portraiture of the domestic life, rural occupations, hospitality, and manners of the Poles. In his novel entitled the *History*, he supposes his hero possessed of the secret of restoring himself to life, during the lapse of several centuries, by means of a reviving balsam. In his pilgrimage through countries as well as centuries, he is made to witness different events and revolutions of states, which he reports in a manner different from the usual, assigning actions, and motives of actions, according to the more probable agency of latent schemes and passions. His part is that of a sceptic in history. This work forms a pleasing narrative, on account of the peculiar charms of the style, and the novel mode of viewing things, which had long been objects of strong belief. It has been translated into French.

Upon the whole, I ought to remark, that the Poles have no literature of novels as the other European countries. The spirit of adventure had little hold of their minds at any time. They were neither a crusading nor a seafaring people. Their life was too busy, and rather public than domestic. Public affairs alone were held worthy of forming a topic for writing. For these reasons

the Greeks and Romans, so rich in other literary works, had no novels. The practical inactivity of a considerable part of the present society, gives more and more room and encouragement for this branch of literature, so fitted to gratify the refinement of effeminate feelings, and the mystical tendency of imaginary longings. It is now not enough to have our bodies at ease; our minds must have also their own comforts. Practical pursuits, both in life and in science, had for a long time diverted the Poles from the regions of that species of fiction. All their novels are but of recent date, being either translations or imitations of foreign ones; and the few national ones may be limited to those of Krasicki and Niemcewicz. Bernatowicz's novel, the *Inconsiderate Vows*, is too close an imitation of the *Nouvelle Heloise*, to deserve the name of a strictly national production. Still, however, it abounds with genuine original episodes of uncommon beauty, such as the "Cracovian Wedding" and the "New Year's Day Evening." Of the female novel writers I shall speak in another place.

As a proof of Krasicki's extensive learning, I ought here to notice his *Dictionary of Useful Knowledge*, in the form of an Encyclopædia, in two large volumes; a very excellent *Account* of the poetry and the poets of all nations, with specimens of their beauties; a translation of Ossian's

Poems, and of Lucian's Dialogues. He also wrote valuable imitations of the latter, in which are introduced eminent men of his own country, conversing with one another, or with the celebrated dead of ancient Greece or Rome. His genius was comprehensive and versatile, and his laborious perseverance unwearied. He died in 1801 at Berlin. Only a few days before his death he finished his Letters on the Gardens. His select works were published in ten volumes.

A contemporary author with Krasicki, or rather a little prior to him, is Bishop Naruszewicz. He happened to live on the very confines where the new epoch of reform commenced, without participating, however, in any of the faults imputed to the period immediately preceding, except, perhaps, a slight inclination to panegyric, and a flowery style. He is the first celebrated author with whom the reform of Polish literature began; and who furthered its progress by his numerous and varied writings distinguished by energy of thought and expression. In his youth his education had been entrusted to the Jesuits; afterwards he even became one of their order. There was an austere seriousness about him, which may partly be attributed to his ecclesiastical vocation, partly to his earnest and laborious literary pursuits. His subjects, like those of Krasicki, were solely polite literature, and none ecclesiastical. He wrote *Sa-*

tires, which smite the guilty with the force of lightning. He might be styled the Polish Juvenal; Krasicki the Polish Horace. The one impetuously rebukes and upbraids; the other, with a smooth courtier-like face, *albis dentibus ridet.* The one is an open, virtuous, enthusiastic zealot, shocked at the sight of vice and folly; the other a malicious guest, who laughs in his sleeve at the foibles of his host and his fellow guests.

Among his other poetical productions are some few excellent *Idylles*, and a great many occasional pieces, which, as relating to some political events, and frequently addressed to persons standing at the helm of public affairs, form valuable materials for elucidating the history of that period, being expressive either of the general feeling, or of the author's own, which appears to be correct, and by no means parasitical. His well-known integrity protects him against any invidious imputation.

He has translated a great deal in verse and in prose. In verse, some few Odes of Pindar, and nearly all the Odes of Horace. These translations have not since been equalled by any author, in strength and fidelity. But particularly, one, which I think admirable, is a translation of Tacitus. It surpasses any that has ever appeared in any European language, in consequence of the Polish idiom being so similar to the Latin in construction and capa-

bility of inversion—a circumstance which rendered the approximation of the copy to the original so extremely close and striking.

In prose his principal original work, valued more than any of his literary efforts, is the *History of Poland*, in six volumes. In this work he evidently intended to rival Tacitus; and, if he did not equal, he at least came very near his model. He is the best historian of Poland, as Karamzin is now of Russia. The works of neither are yet finished. Naruszewicz wrote only the history of the *Piasts*; that of the *Jagellons*, and the elective kings he left untouched. He made a rich collection of materials relating to both epochs; but his death, in 1796, cut him off in the midst of his vast undertaking. The members of the Society of Science labour now conjointly to complete this history,—a work which entitles him to the first rank among the historians of modern Europe.*

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* The literary results of this patriotic union, presented to the Society on one of its last meetings, as ready for publication, are, The History of the Poles previous to the introduction of Christianity, by Czaykowski, Prelate of Lowicz; The Reign of the two Vladislaus's, father and son, the first Kings of the Jagellonian Line, (from 1386 to 1446,) by Lukas Golembiowski, Librarian to the Prince Czartoryski; The Reign of Sigismund III. (from 1587 to 1632,) by Niemcewicz, already printed in three volumes; The Reign of Vladislaus IV. (from 1632 to 1648,) by Kwiatkowski; The Reign of John Casimir, (from 1649 to 1668,) by Kra-

To give you a more satisfactory idea of the two Polish writers, Krasicki and Naruszewicz, let me adduce a parallel drawn between them by Dmochowski, the biographer of the first. *

" Poland happened," says he, " to possess at one time two writers, whose works both afforded delight in reading, and presented an ample topic for

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iewski. Several other periods of history, that are yet in a state of preparation, or have been promised by men of literary repute, are, The Reign of Sigismund I. (from 1507 to 1548,) by Count Ossolinski; The History of all the Kings of the Jagellonian Lineage, (the whole period from 1386 to 1572,) by Prince Adam Czartoryski, Palatine; The Reign of Henry de Valois and Stephen Batori, (from 1573 to 1586,) by Count Tarnowski; The Reign of Michael Wisniowiecki and of John Sobieski, (from 1669 to 1696,) by Professor Bentkowski; The Reigns of Augustus II. and III. (from 1697 to 1764,) by Prazmowski, Bishop of Plock; The History of the Cossacks, by Radziminski; The History of the Polish Legions in Italy, Spain, &c. by Szaniawski. General Dombrowski, who was their leader, has also been their historian. In virtue of a clause in his will, the Society of Friends of Science were put in possession of the MSS. of this renowned warrior.

* Of Dmochowski I have made mention among the minor Polish poets. He has written a translation of the Iliad, which, in elegance, is equal to that of Pope's, and in closeness to the original excelled only by the German of Voss, —The Epistles of Horace,—Virgil's Æneid,—Milton's Paradise Regained, and some parts of the Paradise Lost. His original, and a very elegant poem, is entitled, " The Art of Poetry."

discussion, and to whom the Poles looked up as the great ornaments of their literature. These were Naruszewicz and Krasicki. The one was educated in a learned but austere ecclesiastical society; the other trained up in a polite school of the world. Their minds being exposed to very different influence, each received a peculiar impression, which was afterwards manifested in their writings. Hence the one is serious, and, even in his endeavours at humour, inanimate; the other sprightly and engaging. Both were endowed by nature with extraordinary talents; but the one trusted more to labour, the other to his natural genius. The one excelled in learning; the other in striking sallies. The one immerged himself in the deep sea of erudition; the other played lightly along the smiling regions of fancy. In his early years Krasicki acquired an exquisite delicacy of taste; Naruszewicz, when yet at school, was habituated to a swoln and bombastical composition, so prevalent in his time, a fault of which he could never entirely divest himself. Hence the first is always elegant and natural; the last tumid and constrained. The ascendency of Naruszewicz as a poet, which was in the commencement extremely great, decreased gradually in the opinion of men of taste, while that of his prose writings augmented. Krasicki's renown, on the contrary, though his writings in prose are clever and captivating, rests

chiefly on his poetry. Both possessed of superior powers, and living on friendly terms with each other, they are the pride of their nation, and form splendid luminaries in its literature. Yet Naruszewicz will be known to posterity as the translator of Tacitus, and as a historian ; Krasicki as a poet. Naruszewicz will be in the hands of the learned: Krasicki in the hands of all."

A poet of strong feeling, and of a still stronger imagination, is *Kniaznin*. He was born in Lithuania, and educated in the College of the Jesuits at Witebsk, of which, in his writings, he bitterly complains, asserting that, in consequence of the ill-directed system of study in the schools of that Order, he " lost the golden season of his early age, and the labour of sleepless nights wasted on irksome and unprofitable trifles." He left nothing in prose ; all his writings being poetry—and this only of one kind, namely, lyric and elegiac. The slightest incidents of life were apt to excite his poetic spirit, and kindle his bold imagination. His active sensibility made him often a prey to self-invented woes which corroded his soul. This gloomy trait, however, belonged only to his private life, and not to his poems, for the strain of these evince them to have been the momentary inspirations of his happier hours, under the influence of joy. His pining grief he used to conceal in the sanctuary of his own bosom, or of his sympathis-

ing friends. "In his hours of relief which," he informs us, "the Divine Castalian Sisters alone were able to afford him," he resembles Burns more than any other British poet, and would resemble still more, had he at times inculcated that "Man was made to mourn;" or had he not been polished by learning, which perpetually guarded him from that daring wildness of thought and of expression, so often laid to the charge of the poetical effusions of the unlettered Scottish Bard. In his Bacchanalian songs he breathes the atmosphere of Burns's "highly sublimated essence of animal existence." Both seem, at their outset, to have been unconscious of the natural poetical gifts with which they were endowed; which, though checked in the one by poverty, in the other by monastic pedantry, burst on a sudden, and as if by chance. Burns was a ploughman, and says of himself, "The Poetical Genius of my country found me, as the Prophet Elijah did Elisha, at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over me." Kniaznin again says, in a classic strain of a scholar, "The Muse found me on a green wold, on the banks of the stream Wzda rolling its eddies into the Dwina." The want of a learned education compelled Burns to limit his poetical powers to short lyrical pieces, in which he is inimitable. He has not attempted longer poems, where his genius might, perhaps, have miscarried. Kniaznin, on the other

hand, in attempting longer poems, excelled more than in short ones; for the stores of his extensive knowledge and the capacity of his soul required room and expansion. From these causes his *Balloon*, a poem of several cantos, is esteemed the best of his writings, because its structure is on a larger scale. The title is owing to the incident which gave rise to the poem itself, and which was the following: At a time when the invention of balloons engaged the curiosity of Europe, several persons, living in a beautiful but retired country seat, joined in the pastime of constructing a balloon. Such an undertaking naturally gave occasion to various different preparations. Meetings were held—the debating parties were of different ages—the fair sex graced the council—and each individual was invested with a peculiar dignity and office. The novelty of the enterprise itself—the variety of characters concerned in it—the means proposed and put into execution for effecting their purpose—did not fail to excite the imagination of our poet in a high degree. And though the final result (as I have been informed by one of the members themselves) did not entirely answer the society's sanguine expectations, yet Kniaznin, to whom was allotted the office of poet on the occasion, ably accomplished his part of the task; and immortalized the enterprise, and the individuals concerned, in the poem of

The Balloon, which, by its length and dignified flow, borders on the epic. In it the real persons and real characters, under their temporary titles and fictitious names, became an airy substance, and mere ideal beings. The singular origin of the poem may be a sufficient proof of Kniaznin's creative powers, and under what varied shapes the magic workings of his genius were able to manifest themselves, by ennobling and spiritualizing every thing by its magic touch into poetry.

Besides this his principal poem, there exist a great many lyrical pieces by him of various length —the effusions of his soul on different occasions. Of his lyrical drama, "The Gypsies," I shall take particular notice in treating of the dramatic poets. He, like Petrarch and Tasso, was possessed of sensibility in the highest degree; and, like them, he fell in love with a beauty far above his humble station—a circumstance which deranged his mental faculties, and terminated in his death. In a country church-yard near Pulawy, a splendid monument, erected to his memory by Prince Czartoryski, points out where his mortal remains repose.

From this lyrical poet let us turn to Trembecki, a contemplative poet. His early years passed in activity and adulation of the great, on whom he lavished praises, which are beautiful in themselves, and would, perhaps, reflect some por-

tion of celebrity on their author, had they been deservedly bestowed. His principal poem is *Sophiowka*, so called from the splendid country seat belonging to Count Potocki, in the Ukraine, where he devoted the maturer years of his life to the contemplation of human existence, and its immortality in an after state, embodying the results of his thoughts in tender and flowing verse—charms in a high degree peculiar to his fascinating poetry. This poem, on so dignified a theme, has been elegantly translated into French by the Count de la Garde, and splendidly printed at Rome along with the Polish original.

In the last stage of his life, Trembecki fell into a misanthropic state of mind, and spent the remainder of his existence in solitary retirement. Every thing around him appeared poor, though fortune had placed him beyond the reach of poverty. An admirer of his having visited him, relates, that he had nothing about him to cheer his solitude but a Cossack boy, his only company; with him he used to play chess, or listened to his songs, accompanied with the music of a torban.* In the room where he lived, (this visit happened in the summer season,) swallows and sparrows

* A sort of large guitar, but with a greater number of strings—anciently common in Poland—usually accompanied with the song and dance.

built their nests undisturbed; and their hospitable host is said to have known the genealogy and different families of his feathered visitors.

It is melancholy to think—and history bears too frequent testimony to the fact—that superior qualities should be found united with so morbid a constitution as that of Trembecki, and that real genius should border so nearly on insanity, as appeared in Kniaznin, who, in the range of his bold fancy, was unequalled by any of our poets.

I shall close this account of the illustrious dead with some notice of a poet whose works, though he is alive, may be considered as posthumous, since, according to his own declaration, their number and his literary career had terminated by the infirmities of his declining years. The poet here meant is Karpinski. In him the glory of ancient pastoral writers has been revived, with the additional lustre of an elegiac tenderness and heartfelt sympathy, by which he has connected actual life with the world of imagination. Though he is commonly spoken of only as a writer of pastorals, yet, considering the range of ideas which he embraces, to design him merely as such would be to confine his fame within too narrow boundaries. He gives an ideal picture of the habitual opinions and feelings of all classes of his countrymen, or rather of the workings of human bosoms at large, as they manifest themselves amongst a particular

people. Other poets knew solely the characteristic peculiarities of the one or the other class of society; their conceptions, consequently, were but partial, and too exclusive. Karpinski alone stamped the universal mind of his nation upon his works: and in this chiefly consists the distinguishing excellence and originality of his poetry. Several of his lyrico-pastoral poems, on which principally his literary fame rests, were translated into German. I shall pass over his minor writings, such as his "Historical Account of the Indians," and his translation of Racine's Athalia, &c. which, though excellent, only swell his volumes, and add but little to his fame as an original writer. His Translation of the Psalms, however, surpassing all the former in elegance and energy, forms an important accession to his renown.

Among the living poets, there are three particularly deserving of notice, Niemcewicz, Woronicz, and Brodzinski. I shall, however, treat of them with brevity, as their works will undoubtedly be farther augmented, and their present literary reputation thus receive a new increase. It being at present impossible to anticipate their future labours, any endeavour to estimate their talents and merit would be as incomplete as premature. I will, therefore, confine myself to an outline of what they have already accomplished.

Niemcewicz might be placed at the head of our

living authors, and considered as the *Nestor* among them; both his advanced age and his numerous works, like so many splendid achievements, entitle him to that venerable appellation. There never before existed an author in Poland, whose works were so numerous, and their subjects so various. On whatever department of polite writing he touched, he eminently excelled, and would, perhaps, have produced unparalleled masterpieces, had not his versatile genius been too eager in embracing at once so much within its potent grasp, and thus, instead of concentrating his powers, lessened their brilliant beams by diffusing them over too wide a horizon.

The departments of literature in which he particularly excells are history, tragedy, comedy, novels, songs, elegies, fables, tales, satires, and translations from foreign languages;*

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* His principal literary productions are, Historical Songs, mentioned above; the History of Sigismund III., in three volumes, of which I shall subjoin an analysis; the Life of Washington, with whom the author was familiar during his exile in America; Fables and Tales, in two volumes; Tragedy of Vladislaus of Warna; *Comedies*—The Deputy's Return—Egoist—Mr Nowina; *Dramas*—Kochanowski, a Polish Poet—Zbigniew, a Polish Duke; Novels—The Two Sieciechs, a Comparative View of Ancient and Modern Polish Manners—Leyba and Szora, a Picture of the Polish Jews. His translations from the English are, Johnson's

and every where he is entitled to occupy, if not the highest, certainly a very eminent station, in the attaining of which, amidst such a number and variety of composition, none but men of extraordinary powers can be expected to succeed. He led mostly an active life in public, and evinces in his writings how intimately conversant he had become with the private as well as the public concerns of his country. Both the course of his life and the tenor of his works are marked by superior patriotic zeal,—a quality which makes his person venerable in the eyes of the nation, his writings the most popular, and best fitted for exciting an universal sympathy.

The literary fame of *Woronicz*, Bishop of Cracow, springs from two different sources, his pulpit eloquence and his poetical productions. His sermons excell in a boldness of conception akin to those of the German Herder, and seem to be the instantaneous emanations from the pure source of religious morality,—the more impressive, as they are couched in an energetic and almost dithyrambic language, like that of the prophets of old. His poetry is but of one kind—heroic, relating to the chief revolutions in Poland. The language

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Rasselas—Gray's Elegy—Dryden's Alexander's Feast—Pope's Rape of the Lock—Mallet's William and Margaret. He has lately published the Memoirs of Ancient Poland, in three volumes.

he uses is a regular, dignified, and full flow of bold expressions, and loftiness of pathos.

His poem of *The Sybil* is acknowledged hitherto to be the finest specimen of our historical poetry. The poet, as if by the spell of a powerful necromancer, conjures up, in succession, the ancient kings of Poland from their silent graves, bids them look on the desolate face of that country which they had once made powerful by their swords, and happy by the wisdom of their laws. The words put into the mouth of Casimir the Great, when he looks up from the grave, "*Is this that land!*" are big with fate, and as sublime as Corneille's "*Qu'il mourut!*" and his instantly sinking into his tomb at the sight of havoc and desolation, is an act as strikingly expressive of unutterable woe as the spreading of the veil on Agamemnon's face at the sacrifice of Iphigenia, his daughter. The name and origin of this poem were owing to the author's visit to the Temple of the Sybil in Pulawy, where, at the sight of the ancient Polish monuments collected and carefully preserved there, his feelings and imagination were so powerfully excited. Another poem of his of superior merit, and thought to be only a fragment, or perhaps canto of an epic, is the *Diet of Wislica*, where Casimir the Great is represented as giving laws to the Poles. The poet admirably pourtrays, in few but happy strokes, the dignity

of that national assembly,—the countenances and the apparel of the representatives sent to it from different provinces,—and especially the hardy race of the Sarmatian warriors, who, careless of the inclemency of the weather, covered with the skins of leopards and tigers, seated on horseback with their spears in their hands, and the Tartar captives chained behind them, were then, after the turmoils of so many wars, about to taste, for the first time, the sweets of peace. In all his poems he is throughout historical; but his history is not a skeleton frame-work of dry events, but a living and bold phantasmagoria. None of the Polish poets ever possessed in a greater degree than Woronicz the "*Os Magna Sonaturum*" of Horace, and the regular and sublime dignity of Milton's Paradise.

Brodzinski is a young author; yet his superior literary talents and the popularity of his works already entitle him to constitute a link in the series of the most eminent Polish authors. Last year he published two volumes of miscellaneous poems. Ancient legendary lore is their chief subject, and forms their distinguishing features. Old national customs and opinions, both of the higher classes and of the peasantry, are beautifully delineated in rhythmical tales. The tales of *Wieslaw* and *Oldina* are the most graceful and pathetic: the elegy of the *Legionist* in Italy, the

most affecting. It is a sweet patriotic dream, in which the memory of a Polish soldier indulges with pensive delight, to whom "the sweet sense of home is sweetest." Karpinski was the first, and Brodzinski is the next who knows how to touch most effectually the inmost strings of the human heart, and swell it into tender sympathetic tears over another's woe or another's weal; for with him happiness also has its share of tears. His poetry is simple and unassuming, the offspring rather of feeling than of intellect; not consisting in the splendour of gorgeous expression; the ideas are its essential attributes. He is the most original author in manner as well as in matter. All his ideas are cast in a peculiar mould, and every one has its national turn. They are the aggregate of feelings current among the nation, characterising its history, and its popular songs their richest repositories. He seems to have chiefly formed his taste upon this sort of poetry; at least he was the first who, by numerous translations made from different Sclavonic idioms, brought the aboriginal minstrelsy under the cognizance of his countrymen. He has, besides, made many translations from ancient and modern languages, the principal ones are those of Sir Walter Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel, and Renouard's tragedy of the Templars. The cast of his genius is somewhat akin to that of Sir Walter Scott and of

Goethe; but he has less imagination than the former, and more conciseness than the latter. His turn of mind is rather elegiac. He excells also in prosaic composition. His Treatise on Classic and Romantic Literature, and his Letters on the Polish, are both distinguished by profundity of views and novelty of observation, adorned with all the graces of a natural and easy style.

The Theatre, when judiciously conducted, has been considered to be a proper engine for correcting vice by ridiculing it, and of polishing the taste, by bringing it into the vicinity of classic models. This was particularly necessary in Poland, where monastic education had overwhelmed literature with weeds, and choked up every useful native fruit. King Stanislaus gave every encouragement to theatrical representations, and in his views he was seconded by the enlightened zeal of Prince Czartoryski, who enriched the infant stage with several valuable national pieces of his own, principally comedies. The theatre soon received an additional supply from the works of the actors themselves, Bielawski and Boguslawski. Other authors, like Zablocki, Lipinski, Osinski, translated or imitated the *chef d'œuvres* of Moliere, Corneille, Racine, &c. with so much discernment and taste, that they might pass for indigenous productions. Niemcewicz enriched the Polish stage with six original pieces, above enu-

merated amongst his other works. Kropinski wrote the original tragedy of Ludgarda; Felinski wrote that of Queen Barbara. Wenzyk wrote two, Glinski and Boleslaus. Hofman wrote Boleslaus the Bold. Slowacki wrote Mendock King of Lithuania. Dembowski wrote the tragedy of Wanda, a fabulous Polish princess; all national pieces possessing great merit, though in different degrees, and often successfully performed upon the stage.

In general, agricultural and pastoral nations like the Sclavonians seem not to have much scope either for tragedy or comedy: their life is too isolated, their minds too composed. A constant converse with uniform external nature makes their character peaceable, and the tendency of their pursuits innocent. Their want of acquaintance with the foibles common to refined society disqualifies them for intrigues, as well as for the conception of truly comic characters,—unfits them also for the sarcastic sneers which break out in satiric bitterness. Their satires, if they have any, are chiefly directed against extraneous imported vices, or, if directed against their national community, want the sting of malignity. Their character and their sequestered lives being adverse to all violent bursts of passion, unfit them for revenge or savage cruelty, which render, accordingly, the field both of tragedy and comedy among them very sterile and

unproductive. Hence the Sclavonians, strictly speaking, have as yet no national theatre at all. Their principal nations indeed possess some dramatic pieces, but they are mostly imitations of foreign models; or, if original, however excellent they may be, their amount is too small to constitute a separate Sclavonian school of drama distinct from the English, French, German, and Italian.

What I have thus in general adverted to applies in particular to Poland, where a greater number of dramatic specimens are extant than in any Sclavonian country. The Muse of Tragedy, which alone has a legitimate title to form the national dramatic school of any people, had no rich harvest there, and the little she had is almost exhausted. The pages of the Polish annals were not stained with the blood of their kings and their mutinous nobles. The Polish government was free, frank, and merciful,—better known for its indulgent forgiveness of trespasses, than its severity in inflicting punishment. The Polish kings and nobles neither fell victims to the practices of false traitors, nor bent their heads under the bloody axe,—those who did not die a peaceful natural death, died in defence of their country on the field of honour. King Vladislaus fell at Warna, in a battle against the Turks, shielded to the last by his faithful subjects. Zolkiewski fell at Cecora, and many others met the same glorious fate. But such disasters,

however sad in their catastrophe, being of too incidental a nature, offer little room for intrigue and complication, and are too unwieldy for the continuance of a ramified plot like that of a tragedy which is to be conducted through five acts, and ought to operate with continually increasing effect on the minds of the audience. Nevertheless, such unpromising incidents were, for want of others, occasionally made the subject of tragedies, in which the ingenuity of the authors reaped more honour than their representation applause upon the stage. Where there are no deeply meditated treacherous designs—no satanic intrigues: Where there is no putting out of eyes—no cutting of throats—no tortures—no poisonings, such as often occurred among other European nations, and even among some of the wilder Sclavonic tribes, there is little or no scope for national tragedy founded on the incidents of history, the most fertile and appropriate source for such compositions. The Polish poets felt the absence of these; and as often as they endeavour to erect themselves on the cothurnus, they are in want of poison and the stileto. In order to obtain these tragic implements, they are often compelled to disfigure the subject of their story. Where the crime is only a matter of suspicion, they transform it into a certainty. Felinski has but recently had recourse to this uncandid expedient in his tragedy of Queen Barbara, the wife of Si-

gismund Augustus, one of our most romantic kings. He made the Queen Bona positively guilty of poisoning her daughter-in-law, though this was a mere rumour, founded on the dislike which the queen-mother bore to her, and on the hatred which the nation bore to the former.

This inexperience of the Poles in the bloody annals of crime and violence, produces another effect unfavourable to their tragic poetry, namely, that the pictures of crime are not energetically delineated—are seldom original, and mostly of a declamatory cast. The most striking passages, where remorse, terror, and pity are pourtrayed, are evidently rather strong efforts of the intellectual powers of the authors than the results of deep feeling, and thorough experience of the sufferings of human nature. They are, in a word, the tragics not of nature but of art. For this reason, Polish tragedies mostly incline towards those of the French School. They possess the correctness and elegance of the French masterpieces, together with their unnatural stiffness. They do not transgress against any of the three unities of action, time, and place. The free, wild, and bold effusions of the *mens divina* of Shakespeare are admired on the stage, but none of the national tragic poets have succeeded in producing any thing similar. But to require any nation to have a Shakespeare is rather to require too much.

There is none but one people in Europe which has its own; nor, perhaps, will the world ever produce such another paragon.

Of all the Polish tragedies, that of *Glinski* has the most national features, and is characterized by the greatest originality. Glinski was a distinguished general, whom disappointed ambition converted into a traitor to his country. He deserted to the Russians, over whom he had often gained signal victories. As a reward of his treachery the Czar entrusted him with the command of his army: he then entered the provinces of his own native land, spreading terror and devastation. At last, becoming conscious of his guilt, and repentant, he meditated a reconciliation with his king and country. But in the act of accomplishing it, unfortunately for himself, his plan was detected. The irritated Czar ordered him to be thrown into a dungeon at Smolensko, and his eyes to be put out. There he languished several long years—his daughter with him—his only child, and his only solace. Trepka, her betrothed lover, contrived to bribe the guards, with the view of rescuing Glinski and his daughter, but this scheme also was detected. The Russians, taking hold of him, delivered him over to suffer by torture the most cruel lingering death. The struggle of Glinski, under the consciousness of his guilt, is admirably delineated by the author;

and the intrepidity of Trepka, when brought before the Czar to answer for his plot, is unexampled, and the strength of his republican mind is rendered still more impressive, when placed in juxtaposition with the slavish subjection of the Czar Basil's attendance. Mr Wenzyk, the author of this superior tragedy, availed himself of the patriotic feelings predominant among the Poles during the recent period, which he collected, as it were, into a focus, bearing with intensity upon his production. This ground has been thus honourably occupied; and whoever shall in future tread upon it will probably find much difficulty to appear new and original.

From these general and detailed remarks on the subject of the Dramaturgia in Poland, it is evident that the character of the Polish nation, with respect to the stage, is neither strictly comic nor strictly tragic, but rather melo-dramatic. Literary productions written for the Polish stage should, as I conceive, always wear the features of melo-dramas; that is, reflect rural life in its variety of forms—make the mind appear rather cheerful than malignant—and rather gently touch the heart than convulse it. Our dramatic literature will, therefore, be that of the Idylles and Georgics, somewhat of the same stamp with Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd; and in following a similar train of ideas, some of our poets have actually

succeeded in a wonderful degree. Instances of it are Kniaznin, in his Gypsies, a rural drama exhibiting the unsettled life of that vagrant people: and Niemcewicz in his Georgical drama of Kochanowski, already alluded to.

But, in considering the deficiencies of our dramatic literature, which, as it appears to me, have sprung up rather from the erroneous choice of manner than from the want of suitable matter, should you ask me the question, What ought properly to be the elements and the distinguishing features of the Polish dramatic productions? I would answer, the same which are prominent in the three Polish national *Dances*, the Polonaise, Mazur, and Cracoviack. However whimsical the reply may appear, I cannot help thinking it a just one. No where does the character of the Poles appear in its pure and strongly marked features more than in these dances, and the features must be genuine, their manifestation being so inconscious. If the ingredients of the real character of a people are requisite in a dramatic production, to impart to it a genuine national character, (as I think they are indispensable,) then these three Polish dances contain every thing necessary for exhibiting the characteristics of the Polish dramatic literature.

Observe the processional parade of the *Polonaise*—the stateliness of its march—the dignified grace of its figures—the *step*, slow, but neither

stiff nor heavy, keeping time to the majestic cadence of a solemn music—and you may fancy you see before you the ancient Polish nobility, with all the "pomp and circumstance" of its republico-aristocratical dignity and pride. It is a dance worthy of those who made kings, or sat themselves upon the throne. Is there not in such an exterior a hint for splendid national dramas? Yet I doubt whether there is any foundation for tragedy. All here is open and frank, nothing concealed, no treachery lurking with its poignard or its poison. The only lethal weapon is the sword, to repel offence, or to punish insult, as is befitting the free and the brave. On every face you may read that Scottish proverb, "Never turn the back to the friend or the foe." No doubt, excursions may also be occasionally made into the field of tragedy, but I apprehend the open and guileless character of the people promises no very rich harvest.*

* To what degree a dance can be connected with the literature of drama, the Polonaise of Oginski, the music for which is annexed in the Appendix, may serve as an illustration. Its origin borders on romance; its influence was that of contributing to a tragic catastrophe. The circumstances were the following:—A lady, with whom Count Oginski had fallen in love, preferred the hand of his rival suitor. He, abandoned to the excess of his sorrow, requested, as the least favour from her, to dance with him the first Polonaise on the nuptial assembly,—which was agreed to. During the

Again, look to the light and airy steps of the rural *Mazur*. The variety of its figures are like

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dance, the pathetic solemnity of the music, which was his own composition, or rather the effusion of his own suffering soul, having heightened his aggrieved sensibility, he immediately after disappeared from the side of his lady, and shot himself.

Considering the nature of dances in general, to see a man in serious mood asking the favour of a dance before his death, appears unaccountable and even incongruous; and were it not an historical fact, our metaphysics would deny it. It must, however, be confessed, that a dance which admitted of being performed a few minutes before life's dissolution, and did not lessen, but rather strengthened the resolution to die, must, on this very account, be different from a dissipated giddy amusement, and must bear something sublime in its features. And, in fact, nobody can think of it otherwise, whoever has had an opportunity of witnessing its pompous train, moving on in true national style, and with true national countenances and costume; who has seen a row of thirty couples, or more, the most distinguished one being at its head, parading one after another in a proud yet attentive courtesy,—where old and young are mixed together, the one animated by the solemn measure of the music, the other checked in their buoyancy, in order to compose one congruous whole, and all appearing with equal propriety and with equal grace. A serious, and yet a pleasing spirit of joy rules over all. On witnessing this, I think every one must be impressed with an idea how far national amusements are apt to assume historical features, to become fit representatives of the character of a people, and to afford instructive hints for their theatrical representations.

When the papers of the Count were examined, different

the inextricable windings of the Cretian labyrinth; and still, amid such apparent confusion, the regular and joyous spirit of harmony reigns. This dance is peculiar to the Masovian peasantry, and strikingly exhibits the intelligent character for which they are noted. And does not this dance, meanwhile, contain elements for national pantomimes? Many dances peculiar to other nations appear stiff, unmanageable, and even comic; the Polish are distinguished by all the charms of variety and grace. The life of the Poles being nomadical and rural, has given them scope for light bodily exercises. By means of these they acquired a degree of pleasing agility, so that their pastimes and their amusements have naturally assumed many traits resembling those of the ancient Greeks, and are, in like manner, liable to melt easily into ideal forms.

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specimens of lyrical poetry, set to music, were found, expressing the sufferings of his mind. One song of his became popular in Poland. This song and this music are the only specimens extant to commemorate his fate and his talent; but they have so forcibly engaged the sympathies of his countrymen, that the memory of his name is, like a phoenix, continually renewed from the ashes of his mortal frame. He is the Werter of Poland, and waits for a Polish Goethe to touch him with the magic wand of his genius, either in drama or in novel. He descended from an ancient noble family, which was a branch of a Duke reigning in a part of Lithuania.

Finally, there come groups of the Cracovian peasantry. They have a dance, called, from their own name, *Cracoviack*. They come, youths and maidens, hand in hand. They are mountaineers, and lightly glide, like the mountain breezes, over hills and valleys. They approach at the measure of music, but its strain is not sufficient for the exuberance of their joy—they must unite their own voices, and wing their steps with music and song. The song they must address to some object of their esteem or affection—to a venerable aged sire, or a generous landlord. They wheel once or twice round in a fairy circle, and return again to sing his praise either singly or in chorus. Their song is extemporaneous. Even here, do not they again exhibit the traits of enjoyments as giddy and as graceful as those of the Greeks, the sportive children of nature, during their national festivals? Is not this capable of becoming a rich and beautiful subject for national operas? These Saturnalian sports are the intermediate ties by which the peasantry is approximated to the nobility, and the nobility descends towards the peasantry. Upon such occasions there is room for all natural and conventional human feelings. Dignity and esteem—benignity and gratitude—condescension and affection—may have their scope and their full play. The lively yet graceful mo-

tions, and the glee of life, make such scenes lyrical and enchanting.

Some Polish writers have, indeed, availed themselves of these advantages, and transforming the Cracoviacks into dramatic pieces, contributed much to the amusement of the public. Easy dialogues, songs, music, and the dance, are their constituent parts and their principal charms. Kaminski, the actor in Leopol, has enriched the stage with many of these delightful productions. Some few dramatic pieces of Klodzinski present similar pleasing characteristics of the idealized rural amusements, and habitual feelings of the Polish peasantry in unison with those of the nobility. In such performances the character of the nation is faithfully depicted; and in fact nothing can be better adapted to excite a general interest than the national features of a people revealed before its own eyes. All that sort of interest which the novels of the present reigning Scottish novelist are capable of exciting, when fitted up for the stage, is to be referred to this and no other source. They exhibit a picture of manners, habits, and opinions, common to the people at large; they must, consequently, produce a delightful effect.

Now, casting a retrospective glance over the names of the principal Polish authors, and those mentioned under the head of the dramatic branch of literature, you will, I think, be somewhat sur-

prised at their numbers; and really when I call to recollection all the efforts lately made in the different departments of literature and science, I dare assert, without the fear of contradiction from any well informed person, that, with the exception of England, Germany, and France, there is at this moment scarcely any country where there is so great a current of scientific and philosophical ideas, and so much literary activity as there is in Poland. Literature continually receives these accessions from the zeal with which it is cherished by the Polish nobility, who, after the dismemberment of their country, being seldom admitted to public employments from political motives, directed their whole activity to the cultivation of science and poetry. The same names which at one time were celebrated in the camp and in the senate, we find now shining conspicuous in the walks of intellectual and imaginative pursuits. Literature having been the only secure path to renown left for them, they proceeded on it with zeal and patriotic affection, and at last became not only ambitious of literary attainments, but capable of acquiring celebrity from them. For this reason, numbers of writers have necessarily arisen, and must daily increase. Among them many may be found akin to the giant-sons of genius, and even those who are reckoned inferior have their share of merit and of excellence.

It ought here to be remarked, that this activity in all the departments of literature has been much fostered, and rendered still more universal, by the liberality of the house of the Princes Czartoryskis, who might be called the Medicis of Poland. At their hospitable hearth men of letters, poets, and artists, found a friendly reception. In short, there existed within the last period no literary character in Poland who had not, in one way or other, stood connected with that illustrious house, by receiving encouragement, benefit, or support from it; and those who had not touched its threshhold, seemed by that very circumstance to have been doomed to mediocrity or oblivion.

In conclusion, I shall acquaint you, that even the tender sex, destined to be the charm and happiness of domestic life, have trodden in Poland the path of the muses, and have decked their temples with the wreathes of literary fame.

Elizabeth Druzbacka was a distinguished poetess. She had no learned education, but was the gifted child of nature. Her native language, for she knew no other, breathes sweetly in her harmonious unpretending mellow strain. The poetical effusions of her soul are like those of Thomson in his Seasons, suggested by the different aspects and evolutions of external nature. She does not evince the same depth of thought, but equals him in sensibility. Her poetry is dis-

tinguished for simplicity, combined with all the graces of feminine tenderness and gentle feeling. She spent the earlier part of her life in rural retirement, which she adorned by her contemplative mind, without anticipating the possibility that her musings should ever be noticed by the public. But their superior merit did not long remain concealed. A collection of her poems was published in 1752, and attracted general admiration. She died in a convent at Tarnow, to which she had retired in her more advanced age. Her poetical talents were in unison with morality, and her prevalent enthusiasm in admiring the works of nature with piety. Her poem on Spring commences with the following simple and soft imagery:

"O golden season, in child-like guise! Thou gladdening Spring! Again thou comest, and lovely are thy smiles. Every thing becomes thy playful innocence, whether to revive with warmth, or chill with cold. Who would chide thee, when, in thy hours of play, thou, with child-like frolic, now makest the young green grass come forth, and then hidest it with a mantle of snow."

Among the living female authors, the Princess Czartoryska now occupies the highest station. Her first production was *On the Gardens*. Of the principles displayed in it, application was made in the embellishments of the park and the envi-

rons of Pulawy, the principal family seat, which eventually became one of the finest country residences in Europe; so much so, as to have afforded to the famous French poet Delille a subject for a beautiful episode, in his "Les Jardins." And, really, every thing there is in its own place, adorning or adorned; and has an appropriate signification, endeared by some particular thought or feeling. It is a fit abode for the children of fancy, taste, and contemplation.

Her Highness's other two publications are both entitled, *The Pilgrim of Dobromil*, and both grounded on history; the one on the annals of the Polish Kings, the other on those of the celebrated men in Poland. In both the historical narrative is only the foundation, and morality the superstructure, admirably suited for affording amusing and instructive reading to the lower classes, for whose improvement they are chiefly intended. They are accordingly accommodated to their comprehension, being written in a style of simplicity easier to conceive than to accomplish. By such a course of reading the labouring classes will at length become acquainted with the annals of their own country; and the more familiar they become with these, the more will they cling to the soil which they cultivate.

"This work of the Pilgrim," says one of its re-

viewers,* " will pass from hand to hand—will be understood and cherished on the banks of the Pregel and the Oder, as well as amid the Carpathian mountains and the sands of Moravia. It will wander far among the eastern provinces—will be read by the peasantry of Volhinia, and at the sources of the Niemen; while in the environs of the Polota and Soza the prevalence of the Russian dialect will perhaps make it unintelligible, except to the higher ranks. Everywhere it will be looked upon as a work dictated by the generous sentiments of patriotism. All who formerly had a common native land will receive it with a feeling of the utmost gratitude; and as soon as reading shall become general among our peasantry, the labour of the Pilgrim, and his noble purposes of infusing generous principles into the bosoms of the people, will, no doubt, be crowned with success." Human nature appears ennobled by so warm an interest taken by the high in the welfare of the low, in affording them not only protection, counsel, and support, but also useful knowledge. The patriotic virtues of that illustrious lady claim other praises: they are known and felt by every Pole. I leave them enshrined where they are best appreciated.

Her Highness's daughter, the Princess of Wir-

* Professor Lelewel, in the Warsovian Memoirs, July 1819.

temberg, is the author of a national novel, " The Intimations of the Heart." Here the author has linked the present with the past, modern manners with those of chivalry. The novel exhibits throughout the whole a faithful picture of the higher ranks of society in Poland, and contains much of the acuteness of observation so admirably displayed in Miss Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life. The chapter occasioned by the *Qwesta*, or collecting of money for the *charitable institution*, which benevolent duty is performed at Warsaw by ladies of the first rank, belongs to those momentous passages over which the author's genius was kindled in its flame, and on which the memory of the reader is fond to dwell. The various characters which the noble envoys of the poor are supposed to meet on their errand in palaces, and in low workmen's dwellings, are delineated with a deep insight into human nature, and becoming as it were copies from reality afford delight by contrast. Her Highness's other literary production is the " Tales," in which the domestic life of the peasantry is pourtrayed. They are distinguished for accuracy in representing rural habits and manners, and for amenity of a tender simple style. The subject is intended to make an instructive reading for the lower classes.

Recently, the writings of Miss Clementina Tanska have attracted universal attention. She

has written the "Legacy of the Mother to her Daughter," a work from its tenor, at least in its title-page, somewhat similar to the Maternal Solicitude of Mrs Taylor. In its contents, however, it is entirely free from the mystic sentimentality of the latter, and is chiefly commendable for sound moral practical principles, well calculated to regulate the social and domestic conduct of a young person. This work, on account of its importance, became deservedly a common book of education for young ladies, and its new editions are augmented by one or two additional volumes. Miss Tanska's second work is the "Tales," composed chiefly in the manner of the Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life. They have not the rich brilliancy of style of the Scottish publication, but exhibit much of the same true imagery of lowly life, pictured with plain and enchanting touches of simplicity in thought and style. The general character of the author's narrative is not only to represent things as they really are, but chiefly to produce by their moral tendency a regulative effect. Her work on *Religion* issued last year from the press, and was gratifying to the general expectation, as it has filled up the blank left in the national literature for a book of this kind, by its popularity in matter and in manner.

These last three ladies are the most eminent

living female authors in Poland. Anonymous specimens of ladies' writings, however, occasionally appear, among which may be numbered one or two dramatic pieces by Miss Wroblewska.

Literature and science are the objects of much assiduous study among the Polish ladies. The mode of their early education is calculated to bring all useful knowledge within their cognizance. The education of a Polish lady begins commonly in her sixth year, or even earlier. During their succeeding years most of them acquire a lasting taste for reading and literary occupations. French and German are, for the most part, spoken fluently. Some of them are acquainted with the Italian. The classics do not enter into the course of their studies. The pensions or ladies' schools are placed under the superintendence of the Committee of Education, and no such institutions can legally exist without being authorized by it. In this manner, even the education of the fair sex cannot be under the direction of unqualified persons, and is not entirely entrusted to the judgment of the parents, who may, in general, be well-meaning guides, but not always competent judges. The objects of instruction are history, geography, arithmetic, foreign languages, Polish composition, music, and drawing. Every half-year their progress is ascertained by an examination in the pre-

sence of the parents, and of one of the members of the committee delegated for this purpose.

Such is nearly the state of learning in Poland, and the list of authors who have figured in its annals. Its future proficiency and glory will chiefly depend on the strenuous energies of the present generation; and, to judge from the state of education and the aspiring spirit of the whole people, a bright futurity seems to be laid open.

Let me now close the course of my observations with quoting a passage from Count Ossolinski's preface to his aforesaid *Notices*. It will corroborate the truth of my statements, and throw some light on points which I left untouched.

"During my literary researches," says the Count, "a long series of conspicuous names, and rich stores of knowledge were more and more displayed before my view. My soul dwelt on them with alternate feelings of wonder, joy, and pride. I found none of the Nine Daughters of Mnemosyne neglected; every one had her idolizing votaries; and every one bestowed upon her own favourites her grateful gifts and affection. Nor, indeed, was there any human science unattainable to the intellectual grasp of the Poles. In cultivating them, some have thrown an embellishing lustre over their different branches; others enlarged their sphere. If we direct our eyes upwards to the blue vault of heaven, Who was it that point-

ed out the revolutions of the celestial bodies? Who was it that illustrated the nature of sight, and the degree of strength requisite for reaching such immense distances?—They were Poles. What they adopted from extraneous knowledge they adorned with additional lustre: in whatsoever they were left behind, a strenuous application accelerated their retarded steps; so that they speedily overtook nations which had earlier begun their career, and sometimes surpassed their rivals. There is scarcely a country where learning had flourished encircled with greater splendour. The same illustrious names who were the supporters of the throne and the nation, were the ornaments of our literature. The same hand that wielded the *staff* of command, guided frequently the pen with equal facility and power. The same temples were often enwreathed with the double laurels of the hero and the bard. Our literary is also our political history. Learning ushered into light even those whom poverty and humble birth would seem to consign to obscurity and oblivion. Not to multiply instances, I only mention Hosius, Cromer, and Simonowicz; and refer to those wise statutes, by virtue of which men of learning in universities enjoyed equal privileges with the equestrian order. Learning no less than the sword created nobility in Poland. A printer, who followed the victorious armies of Stephen Batori with the implements

of his profession, was raised to the rank of a nobleman, and the same armorial bearings which honoured the family of John Zamoyski were allowed to him. Foreigners, versed in any branch of science or the arts, found in our country liberal rewards and honours. Some of them repaid their hospitable reception by engrafting the saplings of their knowledge in our soil; which here soon spread wide their exuberant branches, while in their original country they had by negligence fallen into decay. We may look with scorn on those who impudently call us the Bœotians, as if our faculties having been rendered gross by the thickness of our air, had doomed us, like Cimmerians, to live for centuries in utter darkness. Foreigners who will not grant to our ancestors the glory of having added anything to the general stock of human knowledge, or having propagated it in their own country, are mistaken, and grossly betray their own ignorance. They are not acquainted with our language, and have no access to our literary stores. Our literature is for the most part confined within the limits of our own country. It must also be confessed, that we have been known for our indifference to the loud trumpet of Fame. Muret's assertion, 'That the Poles are ready for great exploits, but do not make display of their own actions,' holds also true with respect to learning. Many of them, returning from war or the senate,

have spent their leisure hours in literary pursu
Many, after the toils of their rural life, sough
soothing repose in them; but almost all appear
have little heeded the empty breath of fame, a
chosen rather to follow Kochanowski's maxim,
sing for myself and for the Muses.'"

LETTER IX.

Misconceptions of the Sclavonian Countries and their Origin —German, French, and English Writings on Poland— Causes of the Dismemberment—Elective System—Its Origin and Merits.

DEAR SIR,

"Nations live a twofold life, the intellectual and the political."

HAVING conducted you so far through the literary history of the Sclavonian nations, and Poland in particular, let me now advert to the political opinions entertained by foreigners regarding them.

It is said somewhere by the celebrated Herder, that the Sclavonian nations occupy more space on the globe than pages in history. To this I may add, that there is no people in Europe whose history is more crowded with incredible and ridiculous narratives than theirs; so much so, that their political and domestic existence appears like a heterogeneous compound of despotism, cruelty,

ignorance, and superstition. What the Scythians formerly were to Greece, the Sclavonians are at present to the other half of Europe, so that it may be said with truth, their country is still a *terra incognita.* It seems as if the ancient Scythians leaving their places of abode to the Sclavonians, had, by this very legacy, doomed them to be equally fabulous and unknown. For, though the Hyperboreans advancing gradually from the Carpathian mountains, had migrated beyond the Pyrenees, where at last their very name disappeared from the map of nations, and, though a similar fate of oblivion had been shared by the Arimaspi, Hippomolgi, Vinidi, Melanchleni, and others, whose places of habitation may be found in the Tabula Itineraria Peutingeriana; yet they have been succeeded by the Russians, Poles, Bohemians, Moravians, Servians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Illyrians, Morlachians, Slovacs, Carinthians, Carniols, Vendens, Cassubians, the strange accounts of whom published either under the high titles of Histories, Biographies, and Travels, or under the more unassuming of Memoirs, Sketches, Observations, Letters, in various forms, and in various languages, are more miraculous and absurd than any which the father of historians Herodotus ever feigned or compiled of the same regions, and after him a numerous host of credulous successors. It is astonishing how often candour and

integrity are renounced for calumnies, and for distortion of the truth.

Every nation has its own peculiar and constant character; the Sclavonians also have theirs, both national and individual. Their good and bad qualities,—their virtues and vices,—even their greatness, degradation, and misfortunes, are the results of this decided nationality, acted upon by circumstances, and fostered in the eventful bosom of ages. It is by no means an easy matter to point out the fundamental causes of these complicated changes, and to detect their hidden and mysterious concatenations; it requires long preparatory studies, deep insight and sagacity. Many centuries elapsed before Poland found a historian like Naruszewicz, and Russia one like Karamzin. These have learned the character, the habits, and the affairs of their countrymen, by observing them individually, and by studying their national records. Now the foreigners who have ever written on the Sclavonians appear to have wanted zeal, leisure, and perseverance, to enter so deeply and so fully as the natives have done, into the distinctive characters of the different nations and tribes, tracing with precision the intricate ramifications of their affairs both public and private. They made their task easy. The tourist hurriedly picked up materials for his memorandum-book at the inns, or in casual conversation—took a great deal for grant-

ed with little inquiry, and supplied the rest from his own too-productive imagination. In this manner a book of travels was fabricated.—The foreign historian consulted foreign and often inaccurate authorities, in such languages as he happened to understand, or perhaps some Latin chronicle, if he chose to give himself that trouble; but he chiefly drew his information at second-hand, from hear-say anecdotes, and flying reports, without exercising much critical discernment to ascertain their truth and authenticity. In this manner was a book of history ushered into the world.—It was seldom that any of these authors was acquainted with the Sclavonic languages, which, of course, precluded him from the opportunity of conversing with the natives, or, what is still more valuable, of having access to their written records. The superficial and useless productions thus originated, instead of standing as high monuments of history, exhibit only a tissue of unsubstantial fancies, or an empty exposition of trifles and falsehoods. For these reasons, neither the Poles nor the Russians have hitherto had the benefit of any foreigner, who has taken such a view of their affairs and actual condition, as to answer satisfactorily their national wishes; and whose work they could safely recommend to any reader, as an accurate and faithful expositor of the past and present state of their countries.

Taking all the books ever published on both these nations under one view, I find that they chiefly relate to the *exterior* of the people; as, for instance, their dress, manners, amusements, and mode of living—interspersed with anecdotes, true or false, no matter, if they only possessed singularity enough to amuse the majority of credulous readers. Political views, of which there was no lack, commonly ended with heavy sighs on barbarity and slavery. The moral features of the nation, and still more the literary, as they have appeared in the succession of ages, remained a sealed book.

In confronting the works relating to Russia and to Poland, the first can, upon the whole, boast of a greater number of valuable Travels; her lands being immense, opened a wide field for various researches of this kind. The latter, on the other hand, possesses a multiplicity of historical writings, variously illustrating her political condition. With these Russia was scantily supplied, from very natural causes. She had for a long time no stable government, nor civilization enough to appreciate the recording of historical events. Where the human race is cramped, there is no room for history: It is silenced by the clang of fetters. The Huns had their Attila; the Tartars their Gingis-Khans and Tamerlanes; but they had no Thucydideses nor Humes. It is

with the commencement of freedom that nations begin to have history. Poland being a constitutional kingdom, or, as the Poles chose rather to style it, a *republic*, had a sort of stability in her government, and a substratum of laws, which constituted the basis of history, and their mutual union its philosophical essence. The history of Poland was not the history of the King alone, as is the case in absolute monarchies, but of the whole people, or at least of the constitutional nobility. This state of things enabled the historian to stand on broad and firm ground, and give scope to his ideas.

Nothing is more certain, than that the history of a people becomes more or less extensive, and more or less interesting, in proportion to the number of agents combined to act towards a common end with conscious freedom and energy. It is precisely the plurality of such agents that makes the history of Poland richer in variety of events than that of any nation of Sclavonian origin. This truth is exemplified in the annals of all *republics*, both ancient and modern. A plurality of agents advanced Greece to the high pitch of her political and moral greatness—made the characteristic traits of her people so ideal, and its splendid exploits not only the admiration of posterity, but also a varied reflection in the political and literary concerns of after ages; insomuch, that

the history of Greece appears to be the history of mankind, and the writing of it, in all its extent, a task, if not altogether impracticable, at least requiring transcendent powers. For the same reason, the history of Venice will, no doubt, fill a higher place in the records of the human race, than that of any other contemporary state during the middle ages. The same may at present be asserted of the history of Great Britain. Freedom of thought and of action constitutes its firm and splendid basis. The history of Republican Rome is more engaging and more instructive than that of Rome under the Emperors. The history of one single agent, how powerful soever his genius and liberal his principles may be, can never exhibit such a variety of events, or so full a play of passions, as make their appearance in popular governments,—its interest and charm are consequently lost in monotony.

After these general remarks, which are peculiarly applicable to the history of Poland, let me henceforth make that country the principal object of consideration.

Poland, during her political existence, occupied an important place among the states of Europe, and frequently engaged the attention of politicians and even speculative writers; at the head of the last may be placed J. J. Rousseau. There was no country in Europe, not even the remotest,

which did not stand connected with her, either by operations of hostility or by treaties of friendship. A country involved in so many complicated relations could not but be regarded with different dispositions, and the individual members could not but participate in the feelings of their respective communities, and be biassed by them in their own judgment. None of the writers on Poland have conceived themselves to belong to no country and to no nation, which sort of expatriation Voltaire considered as the first requisite of a historian. Their feelings were too patriotic to find much laudable in a country which was not their own. Hence, in estimating their merits and integrity, I shall rank them according to the dispositions of their respective countries towards Poland, viz. the German, the French, and the English. Let me begin with the Germans.

Germany has had more intercourse with Poland than the other two countries. The Germans, by their very vicinity, as usually happens betwixt neighbouring nations, hated the Poles, and were hated by them in return. The very name of *Niemiec* (a German) became an opprobrious nickname over all Poland and Russia. To confer it on any one was to insult him, as implying something despicable and mean. One who is despised naturally hates those who despise him. This was the case with the Germans. From a pro-

pensity to hatred spring calumny and misrepresentation, to which the Germans have glaringly evinced a propensity, both in their political and their private proceedings against Poland. This mutual enmity seems to have taken place at an early period of the existence of the two nations. It increased afterwards, being kept alive both by their broils in war and their jealousies in peace. The German authors, participating in the national spirit, have on every occasion shown their hostile eagerness in misrepresenting Poland. Begin with Ditmar of Merseburg, one of their earliest chroniclers, and follow them down to Schlötzer and Ieckel; and sufficient evidences may be collected of the degree of candour with which their historical testimonies are compiled. This nation, acknowledged to be in other respects sensible and philanthropic, was particularly busy in haranguing against the interests of Poland at the last crisis of her existence; and by flimsy sophistries essayed to justify the illegal usurpations on that country.

The French, on the other hand, stood from time immemorial on an amicable footing with the Poles; and this amity, strengthened by political treaties,*

* Hauteville says, that the King of France used to address his letter to the Diet of Election in these terms: "To our dearest and well-beloved friends and allies, the States of the Kingdom of Poland and Great Duchy of Lithuania." See Connor's Hist. of Pol. Vol. II. p. 128.

and incidental relations, seems to have struck so deep a root as to survive to the present day. One of their kings, Henry III., was elected King of Poland. Three of the Polish kings, namely, the two Casimirs and Stanislaus Leszczynski, sought and found a welcome refuge in France : One of the Casimirs, surnamed the *Monk*, before his accession to the Polish throne, and the other after his abdication. Stanislaus, after having resigned the Polish crown, was even presented with the Dukedom of Lorraine for life, and subsequently became father-in-law to the French king Lewis XV.; and the present Bourbons in France are his lineal descendants. Polish nobility, Polish statesmen and generals, even some of their kings, were educated in France. In more recent times, the Poles fought and bled together with the French—gained victories in their cause, as the French had on different former occasions done in the cause of Poland. All this influencing the community in both nations, could not fail to dispose the minds of individuals favourably to one another. The French testified their regard for the Poles no less in their literary accounts of Poland than in their various political concerns. The Poles, again, adhered so warmly to every thing French, that, at different times, and especially in latter days, the French manners took the lead in all good society, and French literature became the model for the Polish. So striking at last appear-

ed the similarity of these two nations in the whole cast of their minds, that the Poles have been called the *French of the North.*

Most of the French writers on the subject of Poland had been resident for some time in that country; some with the view of promoting their country's interests, others of promoting their individual advancement. Their long stay afforded them a good opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with the character of the natives, and with their private and political affairs. Their accounts, therefore, bear a certain stamp of authenticity, which makes them worthy of reliance. It may be said of them, that, even when strong national predilection interfered, they seldom permitted themselves to be so influenced, as entirely to lose sight of the truth. This more particularly applies to Solignac, Massuet, and Rulhiere, whose writings on Poland really deserve the name of regular histories, both by their extent of views and the principles unfolded in them. Nougaret's "Beauties of the History of Poland" want variety and concentrated unity to claim legitimately that honourable title. Choinin's Memoirs, from the beginning of the sixteenth century, and those of Viomenil, from the close of the eighteenth, both contain a great deal of accurate and curious information. The same may be affirmed of the *Histoire des Trois Démembremens de la Pologne,*

by M. Ferrand. The French authors, again, who have chosen to be guided by passion rather than impartiality, are the anonymous *Observateur en Pologne*, whose taste for philippics led him to sophisticate truth with unsparing bitterness—and L'Abbé Pradt, in his pamphlet on the Duchy of Warsaw, where his embassy was too short to enable him to form a just conception of Poland, but long enough to create disgust among the nation, and to obtain a stigmatizing epithet from his sovereign, the recollection of which naturally prompted him to give vent to his spleen in his noted pamphlet. But such French writers as these two are rather exceptions; and whoever is desirous of acquiring sound information on Poland, and is unable to consult the writings of the natives, cannot apply to more genuine sources as the French.

The English of old vied with the French in their affection for Poland. They were, however, too remote to be so strongly interested in her political measures and her fortunes. For a long period the inhabitants of this island kept up a frequent commercial intercourse with the Poles, and in the very heart of their country had mercantile establishments. They gave at one time a hospitable reception to the exiled Polish Socinians. John Laski, a distinguished divine, was one of their number. A considerable number of Scottish troops constantly served in the Polish army, and

there still exist among the Polish nobility several names very common in this country, as Middletons, Gordons, Lindsays, Johnstons. The Poles frequently resorted to England in quest of knowledge; for a considerable time two Lithuanian Protestant students of divinity studied every year at Oxford. Relations of so complicated a kind cemented the bonds of mutual friendly dispositions.

The English of the present day do not seem to have departed from this path of their ancestors. They have, however, been strongly biassed with regard to her by the twofold pretext of forwarding the interests of humanity, and of promoting those of political order. Some amongst them, actuated by feeling, thought the dismemberment of Poland justifiable upon the ground of having put an end to the pretended horrors of her disorderly and inhuman anarchy. In this their motives certainly were noble, and might have been more so, had they been confined within the limits of reorganizing that kingdom, instead of extenuating, as they did, the unjust aggressions against it, whereas the destruction of national independence is the worst of all evils that ever can befall a people, and the general body of human society: it crushes the moral and intellectual peculiarities of one of its communities, which loss is without amends and irreparable. Others, who were cooler in feel-

ing, and confident in the infallibility of their calculations, considered Poland as a stumbling-block in the way of the establishment of an equilibrium among the states of Europe.* But have the consequences so fatal to Poland proved gratifying to the presumptuous certainty of their anticipations? By no means. Its accomplishment has sown the germ of political misunderstandings, and of bloody wars, which, at several times, have visited that unhappy country, to render its calamities complete. Both views,

* Dr Connor's remark, made one hundred years ago with respect to the same European equilibrium, is worth noticing, as its truth has become, by the concurrence of political events, almost prophetic: "The order of their government," says he, "and their courage and resolution, does not so much contribute towards their preservation as the envy and jealousies of their neighbours among themselves. For, when the late King of Sweden and Elector of Brandenburgh made war with Poland, the Tartars came to assist the Poles, and at the same time the King of Denmark made a considerable diversion in Swedeland. When the Tartars likewise declare war against Poland, most commonly either the Emperor or Moscovite come to its relief, or else make great diversions on their sides,—for, as it is the *interest* of the princes, their neighbours, not to let them grow to that exorbitant power which they had formerly, so it is not at all for their benefit to let them perish; for whoever could be able to conquer Poland, and unite it to his own dominions, would quickly be too powerful for all the rest."—*History of Poland*, Vol. II. p. 113.

the one dictated by philanthropy, the other by the suggestions of reason, could not, in effect, be crowned with success, as the realization of their truth tended to the violation of the sacred right of nations.

The recent works relating to Poland, which you may read in the English language, are not numerous. Let me give you a short catalogue of them. The most ancient are merely historical, such as, "An Account of Livonia," by an anonymous writer; Dr Connor's History of Poland; and Sir Charles Williams's Sketches of the Polish Kings, written during his embassy in 1748. The modern ones are of a more various kind: some even fictitious; for fiction is fond of hovering around the ruins! If you like something sound, though written in a desultory way, read Coxe's Travels; if something often true, but oftener taken at random *sine grano*, read Burnet's *Account;* if something relating to the restoration of Poland, read the *Appeal* to the Allies and the English Nation in her behalf, (1814,) and an excellent analysis of it in the Edinburgh Review. In the same Review you shall meet with several other articles, or rather treatises relating to Poland, written with profound knowledge of history and the state of that country. If you take delight in accounts of war, read Palmer's Authentic Memoirs of the Life of John Sobieski, and his stupendous victories over

the Tartars and Turks. If you like something in the line of novels, read Thaddeus of Warsaw, by Miss Porter, or the Polish Chief, by an anonymous author. If poetry, read Lord Byron's Mazeppa, or a beautiful episode consecrated to the cause of Poland, in Campbell's Pleasures of Hope. But if you feel disgust at futile declamatory falsehoods, avoid Dr Neale's Travels in Turkey; and if you hate scandalous slander, despise the malignant calumnies of the renegado Pole, Herr Baron Von Uklansky. Anecdotes, with which such books are commonly stored, can represent the history of a people either good or bad, according to the candid or malignant disposition of the compiler; but anecdotes, from their special nature, are far from being fit to convey a just idea of the collective body of a nation; which, notwithstanding the vicious aberrations of some few individuals, is incapable of forfeiting the nobleness of features characterizing the whole human race, and which all nations must have in common.

Let me now cast a glance on the policy and the actions by which Poland rose to her political importance, as a contrast to the errors and reverses by which she was at last undone, and her very existence struck out, like a worthless cypher, from the map of nations.

Poland commenced her political career partly under the mild sway of her patriarchal Dukes,

partly under the oligarchy of her twelve Woiewods, (chiefs in war,) her limits at that time not being very extensive. She rose to her greatest power under the hereditary monarchs both of the house of Piast and of Jagello; and declined under her elective kings, who were chosen by the collective votes of the whole nation.

The elective system has been so much decried as to have at length become a common-place subject, unattractive either for discussion or for reading; and had it been measured according to the real injurious tendencies in Poland, its condemnation might have been excusable. I do not deny it to have been, to a certain degree, pernicious to that country; but most disapproving opinions directed against it have been without foundation, and illusory. Experience teaches, that causes are not always accompanied with corresponding effects. They often undergo a process of various change, from the contact of circumstances, which at length modify their results, and alter their nature; or, in other words, the beneficial effects of political schemes are often destroyed, and rendered perilous by casual circumstances, which are hidden in their progress, and often cannot be foreseen nor warded off. This being the case, the ruin of Poland was not, as is generally taken for granted, the result of her elective system.

Among the causes which have really, more than

the elective system, contributed to her disorganization, there are *three* principally remarkable.

First, The introduction of the Jesuits into Poland, and the entrusting of the moral and religious education of the people to them. Whatever their merits may have been in other countries, their Order was but pernicious in Poland. They oppressed the Protestants, and spreading the darkness of ignorance and religious fanaticism, deadened the nation in the very heart of its existence. The vitiated maxims of unprincipled teachers of morality fostered petty ambition, avarice, and the study of private good in opposition to public, which became the source of troubles and at last of anarchy. It needed uncommon wisdom to support a form of government like the elective, the fruit of wisdom, and projected in the brightest ages of civilization in Poland, when noble pride and high principles were prevalent. The subsequent degenerate state of learning and laxity of principles were but crazy supports for that new and lofty structure of government.

Secondly, Poland was surrounded by three powerful monarchies. Catherine II., Frederick II., Joseph II., were ambitious sovereigns, looking *per fas et nefas* to their own aggrandizement. Russia being, by her local situation, rather an Asiatic power, aspired, by encroachments on the provinces of Poland, to become a European mo-

narchy, and to acquire a high influence in the affairs of Europe,—in which she was successful. Prussia, being one of the rising states of Europe, strove by new acquisitions to put herself on a level with other monarchies; and in reality founded her greatness on the ruins of her mother-country, to whom her Dukes were anciently vassals. Austria, more passive in her proceedings, gained by peaceful diplomacy what the others usurped by intrigue or violence. Under such circumstances, a kingdom far more powerful than Poland in physical and moral resources, would have fallen an easy prey to machinations so unexampled.

Thirdly, Poland had no strong natural frontiers. No sea surrounded it, no great rivers, no insuperable mountains. It was on all sides an open country, and for many centuries exposed to the inroads of the Tartars, Turks, Swedes, and Russians. During fourteen centuries, Poland's sole shield and strength was the valour of her sons. Had she been placed in a more favourable geographical position, or had she been an island, her elective system would probably have never proved her bane; but would perhaps have become an object of no less admiration than the Constitution of Great Britain.

Having thus shown the futility of the common declamations against the elective system, as the only cause of the disasters in Poland, I am even

led to believe, on very plausible grounds, that the nature of the system neither was fantastical nor erroneous. It was not only correct in its abstract and metaphysical principles, but likewise useful, and capable of being realized in practice. For, what can be more natural than that he should conduct the affairs of the community who is considered to be the best qualified for that charge, and as such is chosen unanimously by the majority of the collected votes of the whole community? —a community composed of the proprietors of lands, (as the case was in Poland, and has been in every constitutional country,) and who in the mean while were known to be the most enlightened class of the inhabitants. Were that state of things nothing but an ideal and idle dream, then the Archons in Athens and the Consuls in Rome, who were created conformably to the same principles, must remain but imaginary beings and historical fictions. Had there been, in truth, no practical advantages in such elections, Athens and Rome would never have arrived at their political importance, nor would there, perhaps, be any advantage in choosing representatives, as is usual in constitutional countries. What other nations have realized with respect to their representatives and chief magistrates, the Poles had realized with respect to their kings, the highest magistracy. They admitted all foreign princes, kings' sons,

without even excluding any of their fellow citizens, as competitors for the vacant throne, and chose the one whose appointment they thought most conducive for promoting their country's welfare. In this proceeding there may be something novel, but nothing extravagant. It implies no lofty theory like that of the republic of Plato, or the fanciful monarchy in Xenophon's Cyropædia, but only liberal views, both beautiful in theory and advantageous in practice. The Poles were governed by it for upwards of two hundred years. Here it was not the insufficiency of human reason to project high schemes of political improvement, capable of being embodied in well-going political institutions, nor the difficulty of elevating human affairs to a superior state of perfection, but the malignant agency of external circumstances, that baffled the enlightened efforts of the Poles. Had the Poles been free from that influence, they would probably not have incurred such risk, nor met with disappointment. Their defects and deficiencies would in time have found their appropriate remedies. All plans for promoting the happiness of human society require time to arrive at maturity in the developement and establishment of their principles; and most of all, a form of government like the elective, in which the passions of men have such free and full play, and manifest themselves under so various shapes, acting and react-

ing, building and destroying. The symptoms of this turbulence of the passions are sufficiently apparent in every country where the election of representatives takes place; how much more must they have been so in Poland, where the King himself was elective—where each nobleman had a right to vote in the choice of his sovereign, and might even be elected himself? In the amazing complication of the social order, any failure or mishap in the realization of a political scheme is not sufficient to prove that scheme to be entirely ineffectual, nor will certain sinistrous results condemn it as radically wrong. They may evince its having been defectively conceived, or, what is the same, show its imperfections; but they can never prove its worthlessness or impracticability.

If you approve of the principles implied in these desultory remarks, you will, I think, be far from condemning entirely the elective system of Poland; and nobody, I think, could do it without incurring the guilt of sneering at the progressive march in human affairs. Caprice and temerity had no greater share in establishing that system in Poland than they have had in all the efforts which ever have been made for emancipating the human race from oppression, and for promoting liberal designs. The Poles cannot be denied the praise of having acted here in favour of

the national rights of man, with which they were deeply impressed—a sentiment which can only be maintained by an enlightened community.

In the very establishment of the elective system the Poles showed a deep insight into the affairs of their country, and acted with much caution, to avoid the dangers of a sudden transition from a hereditary monarchy to a republic. Accordingly, they constituted an elective kingdom, as holding a middle place betwixt monarchy and republic—betwixt arbitrary power and turbulent freedom. The same authority and the same prerogatives possessed by their hereditary monarchs were conferred on their elective kings. Their sons, though excluded from the direct succession, were not excluded from being candidates to the crown. They allowed them even a degree of preference before the rest of the competitors; and there are instances in which not only the sons of the kings, but even their brothers, were raised to the throne. Subsequent misfortunes were the offspring of the want of a full provision against abuses. No previous models existed in history of this sort of government, which might have warned the Poles how to avoid the Scyllae and Charybdes, betwixt which they had to steer. It was a system, in a certain degree, entirely their own —peculiar only to the Sarmatian race, who were originally accustomed to the authority of a mode-

rate government. It originated without any general convulsion of society, and appears to have been the natural fruit of wisdom, matured by the progress of ages.

Historical records, bearing testimony to this fact, detail also the origin of that system in Poland. In general, the leading character of the Polish monarchs was moderation in the use of their power, and that of their subjects submission to their authority and affection to their persons. The nation, having endured no oppression on their part, had no cause for resentment or retaliation; and, actuated by religious principles, which enjoin reverence towards the Kings as the anointed of God, actually revered them in a degree almost bordering on superstition. Hence it happened, as I have elsewhere observed, that the pages of the Polish history were not stained with the crime of regicide, which is a rare exception in the annals of nations. After the two lines of their hereditary kings, the Piasts and Jagellons, to whom they clung with affection, were laid in their graves, they mourned over their tombs that no successor was left to fill the orphan throne, in whom they might see the glory of their monarchs renewed. Their country was too much exposed to hostile invasions to admit of a female government. They felt the necessity of having an energetic ruler; but there was none who had a legitimate claim to

rule over them, except he on whom they should confer this high and important dignity. And whom could they with more propriety invest with it than him who, independently of lineage, was judged the ablest of answering their expectations? But in what way was this individual to be fixed upon, if not by the unanimous agreement of the nation? This then they did. The chief cause of their former happiness was their freedom; they thought it advisable to proceed with caution in securing it. They had no dread of kings; but they dreaded tyrants. The best expedient against the usurpation of power was to oblige the king-elect, before his accession, to come under a solemn oath, binding him to preserve the ancient statutes and prerogatives, which they regarded as the palladium of their liberty. The conditions thus prescribed to the king were called the *Pacta Conventa.* Their infringement was to dissolve the bond of allegiance, (non præstanda obedientia.) Thus, by prescribing conditions on the one hand, and by granting privileges on the other, the mutual connection between the nation and the king was established, the authority of the king consolidated, and the freedom of the people secured. In virtue of these stipulations the Poles became the freest nation in Europe; and enjoyed the liberty of declaring their opinion in public debates and deliberations, without constraint or fear. At

a time when, in other countries, none could remonstrate with the monarch without becoming guilty of the crime of *læsæ majestatis*, a well-known Polish statesman could, in the senate, admonish his king in such words as, *Regna ne impera!* Or damp his anger with the republican vigour of a Roman, "*Caveas, ne te Caium Cæsarem et nos Marcos Brutos posteritas appellarit!*" Such a decisive check did the Poles exercise against the attempts at arbitrary power; and, for doing so, they thought they possessed a legitimate right as citizens, and a natural one as men.

Nor had the Poles much cause of complaint against their elective kings; for, whilst the two dynasties of their hereditary monarchs, the Piast and Jagellons, were eminent, the one as warriors, and the other as protectors of science, the elective kings were distinguished for both, which appears to have been in them the result of their superior personal abilities. The first may enumerate many who, like Boleslaus, (Krzywousty,) fought forty-seven battles; but they cannot easily show a Stephen Batori, who was both a great warrior and a zealous promoter of science. The achievements by which John Sobieski was eminent in war are generally acknowledged to have been extraordinary; in peace, he cultivated the speculative sciences, and had also his poetical hours. Some of the elective kings manifested a decided predilection for li-

terary pursuits, which they thought, in enlightened times, more worthy of a monarch than a rude military valour. The last king, Stanislaus Poniatowski, revived among the Poles a general zeal and taste for their national literature. He himself possessed a highly cultivated mind, and uncommon powers of eloquence, which he frequently exemplified in the Diets, and to which he chiefly owed the preservation of his life when dragged captive by the Confederates of Bar. Stanislaus Leszczynski, after his abdication, used to divide his hours between study and beneficent actions, which obtained for him in France the flattering surname of a "*Philosophe bien-faisant.*" Several others of the elective kings distinguished themselves more or less, either as warriors, or as lovers of science. The two Saxon Augustuses alone promoted in Poland nothing but riot and drunkenness. Under their enervating reign that nation fell into a total lethargy of thought and of action. Their friendly connections with the Russian Czars paved the way to the influence of Russia in the affairs of Poland.

Moreover, as the elective system exalted eminent talents to the throne, it was equally fitted to rouse individual minds to a high degree of energy and activity. It called forth conspicuous men in different professions and departments of public life, who, under the monarchical government,

and particularly under the Piast, had been rather scarce. The epoch of elections was especially prolific in eminent generals. The inroads of the Tartars, Turks, and Swedes, and the subsequent encroachments of the neighbouring powers on the provinces of Poland, awakened military talents to repel invasion, and to check usurpation. We see Chodkiewicz and Lubomirski fighting with the Turks,—Czarnecki with the Swedes,—Zolkiewski and Kosciuszko with the Russians,—Dombrowski and Zaionczek at the head of the expatriated Polish legions, and others whose various merits it would be as difficult to estimate, as perhaps their names for foreigners to pronounce, which, however, sound harmonious and sweet in the ears of every Pole, since they conjure up, as if by a magic spell, a long chain of past events linked to his patriotic sympathies, and intimately connected with the varying fortunes and the glory of his native country.

From this, I think, it appears sufficiently obvious that the elective system has not in itself proved pernicious to Poland, but was in many respects rather beneficial, and might eventually have been more so, had its developement been preserved from the contact of adverse external circumstances. Further, it might have proved salutary to all classes of the inhabitants, by promoting their individual interests, had not the right of

electing the kings been confined to the nobility, with the exclusion of the inhabitants of towns and villages. These three bodies might conjointly have formed a sort of harmonious *triad*, strengthening each other mutually,—each anxious to promote its own interests, and exerting, by reciprocity of reaction, a salutary check over the selfish ascendancy of the others. But it seems that it was then too early a period for the formation of the *tiers-états*. Throughout all Europe the supremacy of the nobility was at that time indisputably acknowledged, and the other classes were kept in the shade. The nobles alone were held worthy of standing at the helm of government. The towns which at present occupy so important a place in the councils of the constitutional communities were yet in their embryo, and the peasantry were oppressed and ignorant. It was every where easy to prejudice these classes of the inhabitants; and this happened in Poland to her detriment.

At the approaching fatal crisis the patriotic-minded Poles were aware of the enormities of a state of things threatening disasters to their country; in order to redress them they arose with energy. In a little, abuses were abolished by means of voluntary concessions, and beneficial improvements enacted. The peasants were proclaimed free, and were no longer *adstricti glebae*, as had long been the practice. In virtue of an article in the new

code, freedom was extended to every man the moment he touched Polish ground,—a generous principle in legislation peculiar only to the British and American constitutions, though in the latter country soiled by the cruel exception of negro slavery. The whole Polish constitution of the 3d of May 1791 was founded on such liberal principles favourable for promoting the happiness of social order. It was the most glorious work in the annals of modern legislation, and it became an object both of admiration and applause with all liberal minds throughout Europe. One of the greatest philosophers of Germany, the celebrated Kant, pronounced his enthusiastic admiration of it in these words: "Nisi scirem opus humanum esse, divinum crediderim." Mr Burke, in one of his speeches, panegyrized it with his usual eloquence. "Happy people," said he, "if they knew to proceed as they have begun! Happy prince, worthy to begin with splendour, or to close with glory a race of patriots and of kings! To finish—this great good, as in the instant it is, contains in it the seeds of all future improvement, and may be considered as in regular progress, because founded on similar principles, towards the stable excellence of a British constitution."—But the wisdom of these statutes could be of no avail to the nation, which, immediately after the proclamation of them, was crumbled into dust.

LETTER X.

" *Dzieie Panowania Zygmunta III. Krola Polskiego: or The History of the Reign of Sigismund III. King of Poland, by I. U. Niemcewicz, at Warsaw*, 1819"—*Statistical Remarks:—The Peasantry—The Army—Revenue of the King—Coronation—Election of Sigismund III.—Relations with England—Accusation against the King—Wars—Zolkiewski's Entry with the Captive Czars into Warsaw—War with Turkey—Chodkiewicz's Speech to his Army—Conclusion.*

DEAR SIR,

IN this letter I shall indulge in the analysis of an excellent historical work of a native Pole, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz. I have purposely chosen it, as being a production of a most eminent Polish author: and the great popularity which it enjoys in Poland may be to you its best recommendation. It comprises the reign of our third elective king, Sigismund III. an interval of forty-five years, from 1587 to 1632. It is a period memorable for the glory and misfortunes of Poland, exhibiting the activity of her people and the indolence of her king. It was the end of her good fortunes and the beginning of her evil.

At that period the dominions of Poland extended from the Baltic Sea to the Dnieper and the Pruth; from the Dwina to the Carpathian mountains and Silesia. The Duke of Prussia and of Courland, the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, were vassals to the Polish kings. The house of Austria was not dreaded, it was even slighted by the Poles, who rejected the competition of her Archduke Maximilian for the Polish throne, and John Zamoyski, who defeated his army at Byczyna, detained him prisoner of state in his own castle at Krasnystaw.* The neigh-

* On one occasion, Zamoyski requested the Archduke to dine with him and a society of his friends, but receiving a haughty refusal, he ventured to remind him of his situation by encircling the *solo-table* of his Imperial captive with a chain of gold. He received many solicitations in behalf of his captive; but neither those of his majesty the King of France, nor those of his Holiness the Pope, could move a plain Polish citizen, (obywatel,) who meant well for his country, to set him free till he had for ever renounced all pretensions to the Polish crown. So unshaken was the firmness of character of the Poles, and which none but men born in free governments are capable of possessing. A law was enacted in Poland, prohibiting the use of all foreign titles, as Count or Baron. To be a nobleman of a free nation was considered the highest and the most honourable distinction. King John Sobieski, to whom, after the victory over the Turks at Vienna, Louis XIV. King of France, sent the Order of the Holy Ghost, was censured in the senate for having condescended to bear the "*Livery*" of France.

bouring Turks alone stood occasionally on unfriendly terms with Poland, but were no dangerous foe. Russia, humbled by Stephen Batori—without czars—tired of her Pseudo-Demetriuses—invited Vladislaus, the son of our Sigismund, to her sceptre and crown. With a little prudent conduct on the part of the king, who, though an elective one, was not without power, Poland might have become a more powerful monarchy than the present Russian empire, and might soon have held in awe all the neighbouring nations of Europe. But strange to read in the annals of the human race, the father became jealous of his own son, and of the empire voluntarily offered to him by a foreign nation. He detained him so long at home, that the Polish army which preceded him to Moscow, and the Russian nation lost all hope of his arrival. The Russians, mistrusting the sincerity of the designs of the king, elected a czar from among themselves. Thus, by the misconduct of the king, an empire was lost. There still remained Sweden, which, after the death of her aged king, was to devolve on Sigismund, as his legitimate heir. But upon the death of the Swedish monarch, he found a bold usurper in his own uncle. He sailed with his fleet to quell the revolt, and was successful; but, intoxicated with a religious frenzy, in consequence of the instigations of the Jesuits, his privy councillors, he soon alienated

the minds of his loyal Protestant subjects, and was at last compelled to resign the sceptre into the hands of the usurper. Thus, again, a kingdom was lost: and, in addition to its loss, the Poles were involved in long and bloody wars with Sweden, because the Polish kings would not discontinue to arrogate to themselves the empty title of the kings of Sweden, in like manner as the kings of England used to adopt that of the kings of France.

Poland may be said to have then stood in the zenith of her greatness, with ample means in her power to secure for herself an unrivalled ascendancy in Europe; but she was destined to descend. Our author, in describing that period, may be imagined standing on the summit of a lofty mountain, from which he surveyed, on the one hand, the glory of his country's rise, and, on the other, the disasters of its downfall; on the one hand, its bloom and its promises, on the other its decay and despair. The glory which, immediately on reaching its appointed height, begins to fade away, presents the most gloomy and piteous aspect. Every generous struggle is then seen to prove abortive, every effort, in whatever way exerted, ineffectual. It is of such an unhappy crisis of his nation that our author traces the picture. He has executed it like a philosopher and a poet—like a historian and a statesman—

like a patriot and a calm observer. The tenor of his work, which breathes a gloomy sensibility, impresses the reader more than once with the idea, that he could not touch on several of the events without having felt a painful sensation, as often as he conceived them to be the preparatory causes which, by a gradual accumulation of evils, were to end in the sad final catastrophe of which he was himself not only a witness but a sufferer. After the dismemberment of Poland, he was long a prisoner in Russia, and lived an exile in America along with Kosciuszko.

Before entering on the history of Sigismund III. our author premises in his introduction a short statistical account of Poland, her produce, manufactures, trade, and finances. From this introduction I shall select a few extracts.

According to his statement, Poland and Lithuania taken together, contained before the first partition, that is, before the year 1772, about fourteen or fifteen millions of inhabitants, and under the reign of Sigismund III. might have had about sixteen millions.

The trade of Poland, he says, was carried on with Italy, Turkey, Persia, and all the other eastern countries, by the Black Sea. During the time of Witold and Jagello, (1386,) the boundaries of Lithuania extended as far as Oczakow. Poland often furnished the emperors of the east with corn.

Dantzic and Konigsberg were the most important marts of Polish commerce with the west of Europe. Cellarius, giving an account of the Polish trade in 1660, asserts, that upwards of six hundred vessels arrived annually at Dantzic.

On agriculture he makes a remark, equally applicable to the state of Poland, and to that of every country placed in the same situation. "Whatever riches," says he, "had been brought into our country from the export of the produce of the soil, instead of nourishing, like fertilizing streams, the industrious classes, flowed directly into the hands of the powerful nobles, to fill their houses with plate of gold and silver, and to decorate their apartments with richest tapestries. Towns which flourished were, by the intrusion of the Jews, brought nearer and nearer to the brink of misery. The splendour and luxuries of the seats of the nobility formed an unpleasing contrast with the poverty and meanness of the villages. This debasement of the people was the consequence of large territorial properties. Thousands of *wloks*,* possessed by a single landholder, do not yield one-half the profits which they might do if parcelled out into smaller manors, each cultivated by its respective proprietor."

It is an undeniable fact, that the Polish pea-

* Wloka is a Polish measure of land equal to about forty English acres.

santry, who are settled on the lands of small proprietors, are in general wealthier than those on extensive domains. Accordingly, our author seems here to insinuate the necessity of dividing larger domains into smaller possessions; but he did not show how this might be effected without exposing the present proprietors to losses. It is not even probable that, in the present state of things, the distresses of the peasants could be relieved by making them farmers, by parcelling out the manors among them for an annual rent. All projects of this nature, realized so successfully in other countries, have only proved distressing to those liberal proprietors who attempted to realize them in Poland, for the following reasons: *First*, The want of practical knowledge of farming among the peasantry; *Secondly*, The fluctuation of the corn-trade, the principal branch of the tenants' yearly profits; *Lastly*, The instability of political events, which constantly exposes them to unforeseen losses, and is hostile to all improvement. Civil and domestic circumstances make the Polish peasantry constantly require the protection, counsel, and support of the landlord, whose experience of public affairs can prevent disastrous casualties, while his more extensive resources can relieve their necessities. Thus it is a fact of every day's occurrence in Poland, to see peasants provided by their landlords with seed-corn, cattle, and implements of

husbandry, sometimes with, but more commonly without any return. Their usual duties are not so strictly exacted as may be supposed; and the annual *remanents* or arrears are objects of dispensation often practised in Poland. Where the sense of humanity is not a sufficient motive for this act of indulgence, selfish prospects render it indispensable. Any ill usage on the part of the landlord towards his peasantry turns ultimately against his own interests, as it tends to incapacitate them for performing their duties to him. A wealthy peasantry constitutes not only the wealth but the pride of the landholder. These mutual relations between them often become sources of attachment. There were instances, when a landlord was necessitated to sell his estate and the villages attached to it, that his peasantry offered him a sum of their own saving, not to let them pass into other hands.

The feudal system spreading over all Europe during the middle ages, introduced this state of things among the Sclavonians. The previous more popular form of government, so favourable to the independent condition of the lower classes, gradually disappeared, and Poland became divided into manors and tenanted properties, and her inhabitants into nobles and peasantry. At the introduction of that system moderation was the characteristic of the condition of *bondage;* and it was only in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries that it degenerated into oppression; which conduct on the part of the landholders brought the severer censure against them, as other nations emerged from the feudal state or checked its abuses.

Within the last fifty years the condition of the peasantry assumed a more pleasing aspect; and it is to be expected that the progressive amelioration of the government, seconded by the prevailing liberal ideas of the nobility, will at length leave nothing undone to promote the welfare of this class of society. Political circumstances and legislation have already done much in this respect, and foreigners will not henceforth have occasion to deplore their enthralled condition as *adstricti glebæ*. Their property, as well as their personal freedom, is secured. They can now quit a place and settle in another to improve their condition. The only appearance of restraint that exists is the requisition of being provided with a personal passport, which the maintenance of the order of society renders necessary. The portions of land which they originally occupied as tenants at will, though generally perpetual, are now made by law irredeemably their own property, descending from parent to child in regular succession. From these lands they pay taxes to the government in the same way as the landlord does from his own estate. Their obligations to their landlord are de-

fined by law; and they may seek redress against any oppressive exactions. Their duty is to work a certain number of days on his estate, which they do in proportion to the extent of their land. The species of labour is specified in the landlord's inventory or rent-roll; as well as the payments required to be rendered in kind, such as poultry, eggs, yarn, &c. somewhat similar to those leases formerly held in Scotland, and of which "the king's ain kindly tenants" in Lochmaben still remain an example. In case of the landlord's disposing of his property, the condition of the peasantry on his estate is not in the least affected; they continue to perform the same duties to the purchaser which they did previously. He does not sell the property nor the person of the peasant, as has been commonly represented; but he only sells the duties required from him as a sort of remuneration for the ground he is put in possession of.

It cannot, however, be said, that this state of the peasantry is universal over all the provinces which formerly composed the kingdom of Poland. It was modified by the features of the laws of the respective partitioning powers. In Russia, where the privileges of the nobility exempted them from taxes, the whole burden of taxation lies upon the peasantry. The complicated system of laws in that extensive empire admits of great looseness in

its execution, and arbitrary power in the exactions made by the governing from the governed. But it is to be hoped that the philanthropic activity of Russia's present ruler, and an interval of peace, will, ere long, bring on the desirable period when equitable statutes shall establish more firmly than ever the prosperity of social order in all its ramifications.

Of the military force, our author says, " The Poles never lost much time in deliberation, their chief strength and their security has been always in the edge of their swords. The inroads of the Tartars and Moscovites, and the increasing power and jealousy of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, did not permit our ancestors to doff their helmets from their brows, or lay their swords from their hands. For a long time there had been no regular standing army in other countries: the same was the case in Poland. In case of necessity, each proprietor of a certain extent of land, and each of the towns, were bound to raise a number of soldiers and to join the expedition. Charles VII. King of France, (in 1445,) was the first of the European monarchs who established a regular army, which was composed of 9000 cavalry and 16,000 infantry. Other monarchs followed his example. In Poland, under the reign of Sigismund Augustus, (in 1562,) an army called *Kwarciane* was organized and paid out of the fourth

part of the revenues from the *Starosties* or crown-lands. To these may be added the *Cossacks*, who, during the reign of Stephen Batori, performed a regular service in guarding the frontiers of the Ukraine and Podolia from the inroads of the Turks and Tartars; and, finally, the *Royal Guards*, with their military attendants and the staff of nobility, forming a considerable power ready for the field at a moment's call. Anciently the Poles had no other army except the *Pospolite ruszenie*, or arming *en masse*. Afterwards, it was only raised upon unexpected and critical emergencies. The nobility performed their service without any pecuniary recompense, as long as the war lasted within the limits of Poland. They were for this purpose summoned by *wici*, or written orders fastened to a long pole and carried about in the provinces. In such cases the *Fiery Cross* gave the signal in Scotland. An army mustered in this manner was sufficient not only to defend Poland, but to enlarge her boundaries by conquest. The Polish army consisted chiefly of cavalry, under the various denominations of Hussars, Pancerni, and Cossacks, the first forming its most efficient part. The principal nobility were enlisted in their ranks, and were sheathed in complete armour. The equipment of a single hussar was estimated at about 50,000 livres. Their horses were Turkish or Natolian. A falchion

was hung by their side, and in their hands they carried spears of nineteen feet in length, with two coloured floating flags attached to them, four or five yards in length, to frighten the enemy's horses. Over their shoulders were loosely thrown skins of lions, tygers, and leopards, and on both sides of their shoulders stood erect the wings of eagles and vultures set in silver. These, too, were calculated to frighten the horses. Their stirrups and bridles were silver or gold; their saddles richly ornamented. They were the trust and the strength of the Polish army. The *Pancerni* were a sort of lighter cavalry, and used to carry some yards of silken cords by way of symbols of the binding of the captives. The infantry occupied a subordinate place in the Polish army. In ancient times this species of troops were unknown; and at a later period they consisted entirely of foreigners, Hungarians, Germans, Moravians, and Scottish; for the Poles reckoned the infantry rather a discreditable service for themselves."

The income of the Polish king, says our author, was so considerable as to place him on an equal footing with the King of England, whose yearly revenue, before his encroachment on the church demesnes, did not exceed 600,000 scudi, which sum was likewise the amount of the Polish monarch's revenue. The salt-mines of Wieliczka

and Bochnia formed its principal source. They supplied with that article of commerce not only Poland, but Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and other adjacent countries.

Anciently the Polish kings were crowned in Gnesno, and afterwards in Cracow. They received the holy unction and the crown from the hand of the Archbishop of Gnesno, Primate of the kingdom. Before the high-altar the king flourished an ancient sword, called *Szczerbiec*,* three times over his head, signifying by this act his readiness to defend the *Trinity* and the Church against infidels. He was then conducted towards the throne, where the primate pronounced these words: "Be

* Szczerbiec is the sword with which King Boleslaus Chrobry, or the Valiant, entering Kiow as conqueror, struck against the portal of the city, called the Golden Gate. It received that name from the gape made on its edge by the force of the stroke. The military valour of this king made him, in the beginning of the eleventh century, protector and umpire in the dissensions arising among the different petty powers in Russia and in Bohemia. He subjected to his sceptre the whole stretch of lands from the Dnieper to the Elbe; and ordered iron columns to be fixed on the banks of these two rivers to be the marks of the frontiers of his kingdom, and lasting monuments of his victories. The Poles preserved his sword as a consecrated relic; and their kings used it ever after in the ceremony of their coronation. It is, I believe, still preserved in the archives of a distinguished Polish family, while the other regalia, of more intrinsic value, disappeared from Poland at the period of her partition.

seated, and maintain thy seat granted to thee by God." Then the vassals of the kingdom, the Dukes of Prussia, Pomerania, and Courland, on bended knees, offered him their homage, confirming, with a solemn oath, their allegiance and fidelity. Next day the king appeared in the Great Square of the capital, seated on the throne, in robes of state, and decorated with all the emblems of royalty. There, according to the custom, having brandished his sword towards the four quarters of the world, indicating, by this act, his zeal to defend his kingdom against its enemies, he then conferred the honours of knighthood, touching gently with his blade the shoulders of the new knights, —distinguished some nobles by presenting them with valuable chains,—and at last received the homage and the oath of allegiance from the representatives of the people. The coronation of the queen was performed in a similar solemn manner; but the king alone had the right of putting the crown upon her head. She received no homage, nor was she invested with any real authority. But I shall stop here: these feudal ceremonies are now become obsolete, and venerable only for their antiquity, as characteristics of the spirit of past ages.

I hurry also through a large crowd of dignitaries of state, whom our author describes "as having rendered the court of Poland one of the most

splendid in Europe, as if the king required this gaudy pageantry to cover his want of real power." Among these dignitaries the principal were the two Grand-Hetmans, commanders-in-chief, one of the crown, or kingdom of Poland, the other of the Great-Duchy of Lithuania. Next in place were the offices of the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, both the most important civil functions in the kingdom. On some occasions they had the power of affixing their seals to public acts and warrants, even without consulting the king: Nay, they might refuse to seal the orders of the king himself, if they judged them to be encroachments upon the rights and liberties of the nation.

The author concludes his Introduction with a general view of the state of the European monarchies at that period. The reign of Sigismund III. is contemporary with that of Elizabeth and James I. in England. Queen Mary in Scotland was deprived of her Crown in the very year in which Sigismund received his from the hands of the Polish nation.

In the very outset of his history, our author gives us a detailed account of the *Interregnum*, after the death of Stephen Batori, and relates, at some length, the discordant altercations to which it gave occasion. The personal animosities of some nobles, filling the whole country with dis-

sention, kept the nation in a state of war, and retarded the election of the new king.

As usual, there was no want of candidates to the throne. Amongst them were the four Archdukes of Austria: the Archduke Maximilian being the most distinguished for natural talents and engaging manners. The other candidates were, Theodore Iwanowicz, Grand Duke of Moscow, Andrew Batori, Duke of Transylvania, nephew to the deceased king, and Sigismund Crown-Prince of Sweden, born from a Polish princess of the line of Jagellon. Being descendant of a lineage to which the Poles bore a great affection, he was elected and proclaimed king by the majority of the nation.

The Poles waited long ere their new king came over from Sweden to Dantzick, where he was detained an entire week with much festivity. From taking so long a repose from his voyage, he seems not to have been very anxious to hasten his coronation. He arrived at last in Cracow; and, being addressed in a speech at the gate of that capital, he had the prudence to reply in the Polish language, which excited great shouts of joy among the people, who considered his speaking their native language a sufficient motive to their affection for him. But the new king, in reality, possessed little talent for captivating the mind; and his first levee, which was held on the day following,

presaged no good. "Sigismund appeared," says the author, "in a Spanish dress, instead of the Polish, with the proud air of a Spaniard. His countenance was stately—the bloom of youth glowed on his cheek; but a cold and indifferent temper sullied its charms. This haughty disposition the Poles interpreted to be the effect of the servile education he had received in his father's society."

Nearly in the beginning of this reign (in 1590) the Turks threatened Poland with war, on account of the depredations committed on their country by the Cossacks. The Poles sent ambassadors to hear the complaints of the Sublime Porte, and to negotiate. The meeting of the plenipotentiaries was remarkable. The Grand Vizier accosted the Poles with the question, If they had brought *haracz?* by which he meant the money due to the Sultan from his tributaries. The ambassadors boldly answered, That Poland was wont to receive the haracz, not to give it. To this the Vizier passionately replied: "I give you two months of indulgence; within which your country must either pay 300,000 dollars, or accept the religion of our prophet. If not—the hoofs of our horses shall scatter your land in dust."

Luckily, the intercession of Edward Barton, the English ambassador at that time at Constantinople, prevented bloodshed. He is reported, by

our author, to have represented to the Divan, that "Her Majesty, his Queen, (Elizabeth,) stood on a friendly footing with the Polish nation; that the English had frequent commercial intercourse with Poland; and, should hostilities begin with the Poles, that England must make a common cause with her allies." These representations having had the desired effect, he carried his design so far as to accomplish the deposition of the Grand Vizier, and the installation of another more favourable to the interests of Poland. The Poles appeased the Sultan for the injuries done by the inroads of the Cossacks, by presenting to him a quantity of sable fur.

We see England's intercession, in the cause of Poland, exerted also on another occasion, for the important object of terminating the war between Poland and Sweden. Thomas Roe was the English ambassador, of whom our author relates that he, in a letter, gave offence to the petty pride of Gustavus Adolphus, by bestowing on him promiscuously the title of Majestas, and that of Serenitas, which the King resented by refusing to give him audience.

After this, let us now advert to a Polish embassy in England. The name of the ambassador was Dzialinski. He arrived in London (in 1597) during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, being sent to complain of an interruption of the Polish com-

merce with Spain by the English cruizers. But, instead of translating from the Polish the account of his interview with the Queen, which is nearly the same as that in Camden's History, I prefer adducing the original letter from Robert Cecil to the Earl of Essex, as containing more minute and curious details. *

"There arrived, three days since, in the city, an ambassador out of Poland, a gentleman of excellent fashion, wit, discourse, language, and person. The Queen was possessed by some of our new counsellors, that are as cunning in intelligence as in decyphering—that his negotiation tendeth to a proposition of peace. Her Majesty, in respect that his father, the Duke of Finland, had so much honoured her, besides the liking she had of this gentleman's comeliness and qualities, brought to her by report, did resolve to receive him publicly, in the Chamber of Presence, where most of the earls and noblemen about the Court attended, and made it a great day. He was brought in, attired in a long robe of black velvet, well jewelled and buttoned, and came to kiss her Majesty's hands where she stood under the state,

* This letter is an extract from Burghley's MSS. in the British Museum, Vol. LXXXV. which was, for the first time, printed in the Edinburgh Magazine, Vol. I. p. 29. I have changed its antiquated orthography into the modern.

from whence he straight retired ten yards off, and then began his oration aloud in Latin, with such a gallant countenance, as in my life I never beheld. The effect of it was this, that 'the King hath sent him to put her Majesty in mind of the ancient confederacies between the Kings of Poland and England—that never a monarch in Europe did willingly neglect their friendship—that he had ever friendly received her merchants and subjects of all quality—that she had suffered his to be spoiled, without restitution; not for lack of knowledge of these violences, but out of mere injustice, not caring to minister remedy, notwithstanding many particular petitions and letters received; and to confirm her disposition to avow these courses, (violating both the law of nature and nations,) because there were quarrels between her and the King of Spain, she, therefore, took upon her, by mandate, to prohibit him and his countries, assuming thereby to herself a superiority (not tolerable) over other princes, nor was he determined to endure, but rather wished her to know, that if there were no more than the ancient amity between Spain and him, it were no reason to look that his subjects should be impedited, much less now when a strict obligation of blood had so conjoined him with the illustrious house of Austria.' Concluding, that if her Majesty would not reform it, he would.

"To this I swear by the living God, that her Majesty made one of the best answers, *extempore* in Latin, that ever I heard, being much moved to be so challenged in public, especially so much against her expectation. The words of her beginning were these: 'Surely I can hardly believe, that if the King himself were present, he could have used such a language, for if he should, I must have thought, that his being a king not of so many years, and that *(non de jure sanguinis, sed jure electionis, imo noviter electus)* may happily leave him uninformed of that course which his father and ancestors have taken with us, and which peradventure shall be observed by those that shall live to come after him; and as for you, (said she to the ambassador,) although I perceive you have read many books to fortify your arguments in this case, yet I am apt to believe that you have not lighted upon the chapter that prescribeth the form to be used between kings and princes; but were it not for the place you hold, to have so publicly an imputation thrown upon our justice, which as yet never failed, we would answer this audacity of yours in another style; and for the particulars of your negotiations, we will appoint some of our council to confer with you, to see upon what grounds this clamour of yours hath his foundation, who hath showed yourself rather a herald than an ambassador.' I as-

sure your Lordship, though I am not apt to wonder, I must confess before the living Lord, that I never heard her (when I knew her spirits were in passion) speak with better moderation in my life.

" You will think it strange that I am thus idle, as to use another person's hand; I assure you I have hurt my thumb at this hour; and because the Queen told me she was sorry you heard not his Latin and hers, I promised her to make you partaker of as much as I could remember, being, as I knew, the worst you could expect from her, and yet the best could come from any other. If, therefore, this my letter find you, and that you write back, I pray you take notice that you were pleased to hear of her wise and eloquent answer.

" Queen Elizabeth having rebuked the ambassador for his vehement harangue, quitted the throne with these words: ' My Lords will communicate to you my will,' and withdrew. The mediation of Burghley, Cecil, and Fortescue, reconciled her Majesty to the interests of Poland; and the indignation of a virgin-queen against a young handsome ambassador proved not to be so dangerous as it appeared to forebode at the commencement." *

* A somewhat similar accident happened (in 1726) to Mr Fench, the English ambassador in Poland, whom the Poles refused to acknowledge as such for his bold remonstrances before the Senate against the measures of the Polish government.

Our author begins the history of the year 1592 by giving an account of a remarkable diet. He avows, that "it was an unexampled instance in history, even among the freest nations, to see the king stand a delinquent, and the people his accusers and his judges." Such, however, was now the case. An instance of freedom, the practice of which in France was lately followed by a convulsion of the whole country. Among the transgressions brought, as charges against the Polish King, were his childish occupations; such as playing ball, planting melons, and so forth, which the Poles thought unworthy of a king, and had never seen exemplified in any before him. A leading accusation, however, was, that of his having formed a secret project of surrendering Poland to the Austrian Archduke, and returning to Sweden. We shall see how the Primate Karnkowski rebukes him in the Senate. His speech exhibits, in strong characters, the proud spirit of the Polish nobles; and still more the unchristian haughtiness of that High-Priest. This is the beginning of it:—

"Sire! I see the body of our republic suffering deep wounds. The King, our head, is offended at his being accused of artful machinations. The nation is offended with your Majesty's scheme to betray our republic to foreign princes, and to abandon it. But these wounds I am far from

thinking to be mortal; we can heal them when we choose. We have the oath of your Majesty; and you ought to remember the fate of your predecessor Henry, who, for having broken it by his flight, perished in ignominy. Sire! you reign over a free nation—over a high-born race of nobles; there are none in the world who can equal them. Are you not aware that you stand higher than the king, your father, whose subjects, as every one knows, are but peasants? Remember the words of our King Stephen: 'I shall,' said he, 'one day humiliate those petty Swedish kings, and prescribe them conditions upon which they ought to act.'"

From 1592 to 1605 we find the Poles engaged in different expeditions against the Tartars, Turks, Wallachians, and Swedes, all ending creditably to their valour. The descriptions of battles are not, indeed, a favourable province for the display of the genius of the historian, nor is this subject, on account of its usual monotony, attractive for every reader. Yet as valour does not among every people appear under the same aspect, and is commonly tinctured with the peculiarities of national character, I shall here extract one or two anecdotes as examples.

"During the war with the Swedes in Livonia, the Fort of Dunemunde was but feebly garrisoned. The force consisted only of about one hun-

dred Polish recruits and forty Scotchmen. The Swedish General Mansfeld, informed of their small numbers, summoned Bialozor their leader to surrender, as the only means of safety for him and the garrison. 'Should you, however,' added he, 'persevere in resisting, not a living soul shall escape the edge of my sword, and posterity will seek in vain for the ruins of the Fort Dunemunde.' The intrepid Pole thus answered this haughty summons: 'I pardon to youthful years this impetuosity and insolence. Whoever thou art, I neither know nor care. The usurper Charles is not Titus Vespasianus, nor will our Fort be Jerusalem. A Pole defends Dunamunde; if thou hast never fought with him, come and fight.'"

"During the same war, while the Swedish king, in a village near Riga, gave a splendid feast to the officers of his army, in order to cheer their courage for the approaching battle, a prisoner was brought before them. His name was Kraiewski, a Lithuanian nobleman. His bold countenance—his splendid dress and armour—the leopard's skin thrown over his shoulders,—in short, his martial appearance, undaunted by his situation, excited the admiration of the whole company. When the General Mansfeld could not refrain from expressing his feelings in words, the Swedish king replied with anger, 'Put on your own shoulders the skin of a wolf, and you shall look as terrible

as this fellow now appears in your eyes.'" The captive is then said to have accosted the king, without waiting to be previously addressed: "Sire, the Polish army is not numerous; it consists only of 3500 men, and besides is fatigued by long journeys: Our Hetman will nevertheless not avoid an engagement with you."—"Thy Hetman," replied the Swedish king, "must then be a madman." The king, somewhat discomposed by his new guest, showed him, however, the civility of placing him at the table with his own officers. After the feast, he immediately marched, with 10,000 infantry and 4000 cavalry, towards Kirchholm, to meet the Hetman; and it happened according to the captive's prediction, that his army was totally defeated, and he himself narrowly escaped to his fleet, where, finding the captive Kraiewski, he stabbed him. This victory of the Poles was at that time so celebrated, that congratulations were sent from all quarters to the King of Poland, from Pope Paul V., the Emperor Rudolphus, James I. King of England, the Sultan of Turkey, and Shah Abbas of Persia.

From 1609 to 1619 the whole of the attention of the Poles was directed towards Russia. This empire, which had, for two centuries, groaned under the heavy yoke of the Tartars, was for a time governed by the despotic sceptre of a usurper named Boris Gudenow. After his death, his son, Theodore, a youth of sixteen years of age, suc-

ceeded; but, unable to hold the Boyars in awe, he soon was assassinated in revenge for his father's tyranny. After him three Demetriuses, pretenders to the throne, successively appeared, and fell also, one after another, victims of their ambition. Russia then became a discordant chaos of dissention. Lacerated by the party spirit of her Boyars, and oppressed by a new usurper, Szuyski, she looked to Poland for relief. Vladislaus, the son of Sigismund, was, as I have formerly remarked, chosen Czar; but his protracted departure, on an occasion which admitted of no delay, estranged from him the minds of the Russians. The Poles fought many battles in his cause, and took Smolensko and Moscow. Some detachments of their army pushed their victories as far as Susdal and Caucasus. But, notwithstanding so many advantages, they were unable to establish Vladislaus in the throne of which the imprudence of his father had bereft him. The House of Romanow, which is that of the present emperor, began from that period to reign over Russia, whose fortune it was, after the lapse of two succeeding centuries, to subjugate Poland, because a Polish king had before neglected to extend Poland's ascendancy over Russia.

Allow me now to take notice of some incidents which occurred, during this period, fraught with Poland's subsequent fate. The first that claims

our attention is the departure of Vladislaus from Warsaw to Moscow, and especially the farewell speech of the Primate Gembicki, addressed to him in the cathedral, before the royal family and the senators. I shall translate a passage from it, as containing a specimen of national apostolic eloquence.

" Prince, as you are about to leave us, and we must part with you, our hearts overflow both with joy and with sorrow. With how many dangers is the path of your life beset; and with how many misfortunes! Not in battles alone are they encountered; but even in the serene hours of peace. Learn how temerity differs from valour, and flattery from sincerity. You will be accompanied by men distinguished by their probity and wisdom, who will assist you with their counsel. Let no frivolous and corrupted minds have access to you, or share your confidence. Act with wisdom and you will prosper. Such was the conduct of Vladislaus of Warna, of Casimir, and Albertus, when they were nearly of your age. What Heaven has in store for you it would be presumptuous in man to inquire. If it is your destiny to sit on the throne of the Russian empire, be it your great study to govern the people with justice and mildness;—yet, never forget the land that gave you birth; nor the kingdom over which your predecessors ruled, the glorious Piasts and Jagellons;

where their ashes are entombed; where your royal father now reigns; and where a nation lives which accompanies you with affection and love. I decus, i nostrum, melioribus utere fatis!"

The second passage I shall translate relates to the organization of a body of volunteer cavalry, named, after the commander, *Lissowczyki*. They were not to receive any pay, which became a burthensome object for a nation engaged in perpetual wars; but were to subsist by rapine and plunder. At that time, the most renowned chieftains were not scrupulous about the choice of means, provided they could obtain their end. The chief of these volunteers was Lissowski, a Lithuanian nobleman, distinguished by his superior courage in different campaigns. The hope of impunity and of rapine enticed many adventurers to join this corps. Lissowski having mustered a considerable number of them, addressed them in the following words:

"Your king and your country have devoted you to hardships and to danger; but, in compensation, they allow you liberties and rewards, which they prohibit to others. Courage and the sword must gain you the object of your reward. These present you with brighter prospects than your country is able to afford. The path on which you are about to enter is unusual. If there is one among you who would hesitate to rush on the cannon pointed against him, and singly to en-

counter ten of the enemy, or who would not, at my orders, be the first to scale the walls of a hostile city, or to plunge into deep and rapid streams, let him be gone—we cannot want him. Your accoutrements must be this,—a musket, a sword, a bow, arrows, and a spear. Thus must ye mount on a swift and strong steed. No needless baggage,—no waggons,—no servants, will I suffer. All your wants you must supply for yourselves. I require no intricate evolutions, or nice manœuvres. To attack the enemy intrepidly—to disband yourselves when necessary—to counterfeit flight, and to return,—this is all you have to do. You shall have rest when occasion permits—on emergencies your labour shall not know night and day. Henceforth, your only ambition must be to pursue the foe wherever he is lodged—to burn villages, and plunder cities—to drive off the cattle and the flocks—to make all captive, or to spare neither sex nor age."

This band, headed by such a leader, knew no fear, and heeded no dangers. They were designated by the name of *Stracency*, or the doomed troop. After the death of their leader, they long continued to exist under his name. When their service was not required in their own country, they enrolled themselves in that of foreign powers. Accordingly, we find them often in Austria, Bo-

hemia, and Hungary, spreading terror and dismay.

The third and last passage I shall quote is that of the triumphal entry of Zolkiewski into Warsaw, conducting the Czar Szuyski captive, after the taking of Moscow.

"The senate and the people," says the author, "received the king, on his return from Russia, with joy. Their joy still increased, when they saw the Hetman Zolkiewski entering the capital in triumphal parade, in the same manner as was usual in Rome, and conducting the Czar of Russia. His staff preceded him on horseback, adorned suitably to the occasion, followed by sixty carriages. In the last, outvieing the others in splendour, sat the Hetman himself, drawn by six milk-white Arabian horses. With him the Czar, and his two brothers. The chief of the guards rode before them. The people flocked from all quarters to see the illustrious captives. The Czar, with a look in which sadness was painted, kindly bowed to the gazing multitude. The Patriarch of Moscow, Sehin the Governor of Smolensko, and other Russian boyars, were conducted in separate carriages. Several regiments of infantry and cavalry brought up the whole train. Whilst they were thus advancing towards the Royal Palace, Sigismund on his throne, and the senators in their seats, expected their arrival. The Grand Het-

man entered the Great Hall, leading the Czar by the hand, and his brothers following. A murmur of mournful joy arose in the Hall. Tears watered the eyes of many. After a pause of silence, the Hetman, approaching nearer the throne, delivered a modest speech, in which he attributed all his successes to the Almighty; and, commending his captives to the king, reminded him of mercy and moderation in prosperity. Of himself and of his actions he was silent.

The Czar and his brothers were at first confined in Warsaw; subsequently in the Castle of Gostyn. The painter, Dolabelli, represented, in a painting of considerable size, both the *assault* of Smolensko and *the Czars* led in captivity, with most accurate likenesses of the persons present on that occasion. These paintings long ornamented the halls of the royal palace, till the reign of the Saxon Augustus, who, being a foreigner, and setting little value on such national monuments, gave them as a present to Peter the Great. The Czars, who died soon after their captivity, were buried in Warsaw, and a splendid monument was erected to their memory. It does not now exist, having been broken to pieces by the rude order of the Russian ambassador Repnin. The epitaph, which has been preserved, I here give as a curiosity.

Jesu Christi Dei Filii
Regis Regum, Dei Exercituum Gloriæ,
Sigismundus III. Rex Poloniæ et Sueciæ,
Exercitu Moscovitico ad Clusinum cæso, Moscoviæ metropoli deditione accepta, Smolensco Republicæ restituto—
Basileo Szuyscio, Magno Duci Moscoviæ, et fratri eius Demetrio, militiæ præfecto, captivis jure belli receptis, et in arce Gostinensi sub custodia habitis, ibique vita functis.
Humanæ sortis memor
Ossa illorum huc deferre
Et ne, si regnante, etiam hostes
Injusteque sceptra parantes
Justis sepulturaque carerent;
In hoc
A se, ad publicam posteritatis memoriam,
Regni sui nomen,
Extructo Trophæo
Deponi jussit.

Anno a partu Virginis MDCXX.
Regnorum Poloniæ XXXIII.
Sueciæ XXVI.

The wars with Russia being ended, we find the Poles involved in a war with the Turks and Tartars. The Cossacks again gave the occasion for it. This predatory set of people had long been addicted to plunder on the shores of the Black Sea. Sailing in their small boats called *czayki*, they had often spread alarm in Constantinople and Asia Minor,—plundered Trebizond and Synope,—killed the Pasha of Cilicia, and sunk two of his vessels. Amurath the Great used to

say, that, in spite of all the potentates in Europe, he could sleep on both ears; but these gadflies (the Cossacks) would scarcely suffer him to sleep on either. At this time they had plundered the Crimea. The injured Tartars looked for succour to the Turks; and the faith of Islam, consolidating the ties of their union, ranged them under the standard of Mahomed against the Giaours. Thus Poland having constantly to control the buoyant passion of her subjects, was besides compelled to guard herself against the inroads of the barbarians, and watch carefully over her domestic hearth. This necessity of vigilance developed in the Poles a courage and intrepidity which raised their military achievements to the high models of the Greeks and Romans. They were *prodigi vitae* for their country. Their *Oyczyzna* is quite synonymous with the *Patria* of the Roman citizens, and the *Civis Romanus* with the Polish *Obywatel.* Their annals evince, that "Dulce pro patria mori" was never a mere school-phrase with the Pole, but a feeling of his heart. The freedom which they enjoyed in private life, and with which they signalized their actions in public, dignified still more their patriotism, and often raised it to sublimity. Their victories, as well as their defeats, excite admiration; and sometimes it is doubtful which of them do it more. Numerous instances of the latter might be adduced

from history; but I shall confine myself to the reign of Sigismund alone, and select two samples. The one is Zolkiewski, who, after having brought the captive Czars to the capital, was next despatched with 7000 men to oppose an army consisting of 150,000 Turks and Tartars. He, nevertheless, began by obtaining some advantages over them in different encounters. But, no human valour being able to bear up against such inequality of numbers, he resolved to retreat, and was for nearly a fortnight harassed day and night by swarms of Turks and Tartars, and by the greatest enemy of man—famine. Disdaining to surrender himself captive, he determined to fight and to die. He fell; and his army shared his fate—only a few fell into the hands of the enemy, protracting their lives in captivity, or submitting to an inglorious death. This fatal event took place at Cecora, in 1620; and the recollection of it affects the Poles with sadness, no less than the battle of Macieiowice, the Polish Culloden, in 1794. To avenge this unhappy but glorious defeat, and to save the country from utter ruin, Chodkiewicz, another famous chief, was despatched; but his force was also small. In order to give you a specimen of military eloquence, I shall venture to introduce him here, addressing his small army on the eve of the battle, to prepare them for victory or death, the latter of which was the more

likely. On reading this passage, one seems to feel a similar sensation as on reading the account of the three hundred Spartans, with Leonidas at their head, in the Pass of Thermopylæ.

"It is my fortune, Soldiers," he said, "and the necessity of my country is such, that I again must lift up my sword. My strength is impaired by hardships; my limbs weighed down by years. In once more becoming your leader I only obey the call of my country. For, what other motive could induce me to cover these grey hairs with this iron helmet? Distinction, honours, all the objects of man's ambition I have possessed, they have even been thrust on me. Nothing remains that I can desire, except the glory of dying for my country. I am ready then to sacrifice my life, and with you by my side I cannot fall inglorious. Soldiers! You are on the eve of battle. Reflect that you ought to be the shield of your native land, and the avengers of the death of your fellow-citizens. The ground on which we stand is yet reeking with the blood of Zolkiewski, and as far as the eye can reach, the weather-beaten bones of your unburied kinsmen lie widely scattered. They do not solicit your tears and lamentations—they call for revenge! The blood which you will shed—the enemies which you will kill, will be so many expiatory victims to their manes. The devastations and insults of the infidels should

no longer be borne with impunity. Even now, while I address you, the fierce Noradin, and his savage hordes, spread murder and desolation over Russia and Podolia. Whilst you are here, they are burning your villages—slaughtering your parents, your relations, and friends, and are dragging your daughters and sisters into shameful captivity. This day will be decisive for us. It matters little whether Wallachia is ours or theirs; but it does matter whether Poland shall be free and independent, or the standard of Mahomet wave on the banks of the Vistula;—whether Noradin shall with impunity profane your churches, abolish your statutes, and make you his slaves;—whether you shall preserve any longer the language your ancestors spoke, or speak that of the barbarians! Why has Osman stirred up so many nations in Asia and Africa?—Is it not to make you bend beneath his yoke? But be not afraid of these multitudes, and this vain oriental pageantry: the one is but a mob, the other an empty shadow. They are effeminate in habits, in dress, and in mind. Their bodies relaxed by luxury, can they withstand the valour of the ancient Sarmatians,—of those Poles who formerly fixed the iron land-marks on the Dnieper and the Elbe, to mark the extent of their conquests? These elephants, these herds of camels, laden with the dainties of the East, will disperse at the very

sound of your clarions—at the gleam of your arms. So soon, then, as I give you the word, Poles and Lithuanians, advance and bravely meet the foe. Besides, what would it avail you to hesitate? You have no chance of retreat. Here flows the rapid Dniester,—there rise insurmountable rocks—and before you stand the Turks and the Tartars. You are surrounded upon all sides; but glory opens a boundless space for heroes. Breathes there amongst you the soul of a coward, desperate necessity must make him brave. (Here, lifting his hand to Heaven, he continued.) And Thou, justice of Heaven! Thou that givest their thrones to kings, and victories to armies, arise against the blasphemers of thy name: help us to revenge: and with the motion of thy finger, smite the impious bands of the infidels!"

Here he ended. Courage and devotion filled every bosom. The army having then received the sacrament, and the signal being given to march, raised the *Bogarodzica*, a solemn hymn to the *Virgin*.

This hymn, and that of the *Gloriosa Domina*, were usually sung by the Poles before battle. They are both addressed to the Virgin Mary, who is held to be the protectress of the Polish kingdom. And on this occasion, it cannot be denied, that the Poles were well protected; for, whether by the good will of the Virgin, or the good steel

of the Poles, 75,000 men obtained a complete victory over an allied army of 400,000 Turks and Tartars. This battle was fought near Chocim in 1621.

But this letter, if farther extended, would become too long; although I cannot presume to think I have done sufficient justice to our author. His history is too closely connected for detached quotations, and derives much beauty from the reflection of the parts on each other. In selecting the preceding passages, I rather considered their brevity and the information they conveyed, than any striking excellence above the rest. Had I intended to show our historian in an advantageous and brilliant light, I should have quoted his chapter of the retreat of Zolkiewski,—the description of the battle near Kirchholm, famed for the defeat of the Swedes,—the cruel slaughter of the Poles at Moscow during the wedding festival of the Pseudo-Demetrius, and their unparalleled sufferings by famine when besieged in the Kremlin,—the one exhibiting a spectacle of the Sicilian Vespers, or that of St Bartholomew's Night,—the other the terrific aspect of the famishing family of Ugolinos. Horses and even dead bodies constituted their food. But even such sad though splendid passages of our historian could scarcely satisfy you; they would be but translations, such as those from the Greek or Latin, the best of

which are faint representations of their originals. Every language has its own charms, which cannot be transferred into another. One who knows Pope's English Homer, and Taylor's English Plato, does not yet know Homer the Ionian, or Plato the Athenian. I did not even intend to decide upon the extent of our author's abilities as a historian. I must caution you against such a mistake. His work is a national monument, best understood and best felt by the natives, as the history of Herodotus was felt by the Greeks, and the poems of Burns are by his own countrymen. The natives are the best judges of the merits of their national literary productions. They judge both by the more comprehensive knowledge of their own affairs, and by the peculiar bearing they have upon their feelings, whereas a foreigner must ever be inferior from his want of acquaintance and sympathy. This is one of the last of Mr Niemcewicz's works, by which he has augmented the series of his writings, and added a new wreath to his literary renown.

In a short time, another history of the same reign of Sigismund III. is to be published, written by Siarczynski, the Canon of Warsaw. The history of Niemcewicz related chiefly to the political events in Poland, while that of the Canon is rather calculated to give a picture of the internal affairs of that country. It will appear in four

volumes. The first is to contain an account of the state of religion and learning in Poland; the second, of celebrated men of all ranks and professions; the third, of the relations betwixt Poland and foreign countries, wars, treaties, and losses of provinces; the fourth, a statistical account of Poland, her commerce, manufactures, customs, and manners.

Nos quoque floruimus! And, what the Scottish bard says of his own native land,

> Old times were changed, old manners gone,
> A stranger filled the Stuart's throne,

may well be applied to Poland. Every nation bears in itself the seeds of its greatness and decline, of its bloom and decay. On some, the hard hand of destiny has manifested its influence, and on others it will manifest it in the progress of ages. The Polish, as well as the Scottish nation, and some others, have terminated their separate career; but even after the change of their political form of being independent representatives in the council of nations, they still survive in the peculiarity of their national spirit, and feelings originating in their former existence are at every moment evolved from their bosoms.

LETTER XI.

" Guide du Voyageur en Pologne et dans la République de Cracovie—Varsovie—Glucksberg, 1820" —Introduction—Cracow—The Salt Mines of Wieliczka—The Caverns of Czaiowice — Warsaw — Nieborow — Pulawy—Posting—Miscellaneous Remarks—The Jews.

DEAR SIR,

As connected with the preceding letters, I send you the following article, which appeared in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for June 1822, written by a friend from information furnished by me, containing also a few additional materials.

Books bearing so humble a title as the present, however useful to the traveller in the country they describe, are seldom consulted for information or amusement by those who can only travel by their own firesides—and, in truth, they are very rarely worthy of such consultation, their sole intention being not to give full information, but to facilitate and direct those who wish to gain

it for themselves by actual and personal examination. Paterson's Road-book would give but a poor idea of England. Poland, however, interesting as that ill-fated kingdom is, has never been sufficiently described in works of a superior class; and we found insuperable difficulties in our sedentary peregrinations through it, from the want of clear and satisfactory descriptions of the people, places, and things, in any books we could meet with. On stating our grievance to a Polish friend, he was kind enough to send us this Traveller's Guide, with some valuable information of his own, of which we shall avail ourselves in the course of our remarks.

This book, as its name imports, is intended as a guide to foreign travellers in Poland. As usual, the principal post-roads are marked out,—the principal towns through which they pass are described,—and the objects chiefly worthy of attention are pointed out, sometimes, it is true, rather too minutely. In fact, there are many details which can only be interesting to those who use the book as a travelling companion, and it is only after turning over many pages that any thing generally interesting can be found. The accounts are, however, according to our information, candid and just, and calculated to give a tolerably correct idea of the kingdom of Poland, as *it is now constituted*, including the territory of the free

town of *Cracow*. The extensive provinces formerly included in that kingdom, but now united to Russia, Austria, and Prussia, are not described. To this description the author has annexed certain "notes instructives et nécessaires à ceux qui voyagent en Pologne;" and, with all submission, this is exactly the part of the book which is most instructive and necessary for those who have it not in their power to travel in Poland, and we shall make use of it in the sequel accordingly.

The book is published anonymously, but is well known to be the production of the celebrated General Krasinski, who highly distinguished himself in the late campaigns. To make it more generally useful, he has written in the French language, and his object in undertaking so humble a task was to remove the misconceptions arising from the prejudice, and perhaps the malice, which disgraced the accounts of previous foreign writers. Thus we see, that in Poland, as well as in our own country,* the hero, whose glory it was to defend his native land from the desolation of war, does not disdain to exercise his talents in peace to ward off the shafts of envy or malignity, and to set the character of his country and his countrymen in a fair and true light

* See Colonel Stewart's Sketches of the Highlanders.

before the world. Our Polish friend writes to us as follows:

"I may remark to you, in general, that my military countrymen are particularly zealous in all that concerns the good and honour of their country. They give celebrity to it in war by their valour, and adorn it in peace by their literary pursuits. Polish literature is greatly indebted for its increase to their real and superior talents. I would not here make this remark, were they only dilettanti in literature and science; but I can assert that they cultivate them thoroughly, and know as well how to sacrifice to the *Nine Sisters* as to *Mars*. Several years ago, we boasted of a homely elegiac poet, *Godebski*. He fell on the field of battle at *Raszyn*, in the year 1809, where 8000 Poles fought against 40,000 Austrians—and were victorious. A bard in his tomb could never have an epitaph more glorious than such a victory!—Among the living authors is *General Kropinski*, who fought at the side of Kosciuszko in the cause of freedom, and now spends the remainder of his life in literary occupations. His national *Tragedy* of *Ludgarda*, so often performed and generally admired, has established for ever his fame as a poet;—and his other productions have gained him the name of an elegant writer. *Colonel Chodkiewicz* followed the path of Addison, by writing the tragedy of *Cato*. He has dis-

tinguished himself by different pieces of epistolary poetry; but for several years has been devoting himself to chemical studies, and has published a great many of his profound researches.—*General Morawski* has lately attracted considerable attention by some original lyrical pieces of poetry —and also by his admirable skill, and the elegance of his style, in translations from the German and French. There are, besides, some other distinguished names in the military calendar that might be mentioned, whose eagerness and talents in literary pursuits are appreciated by their countrymen; but I have named only the principal ones, whose works are looked upon as the ornaments of national literature, and will never cease to be read as long as the Polish language shall be spoken or understood."

To return to the work before us, it cannot claim for its author any such distinguished praise as our friend bestows on the literary heroes he has mentioned. Its subject-matter is hardly worthy of an author of the rank of Krasinski, and its language is foreign—The style is somewhat too elevated; but the details are not exaggerated. Its object, however, which we shall now allow the General to describe for himself, is good. He says,

"It is melancholy to observe, that Poland, notwithstanding the renown she has acquired in the history of the latter ages, both by the glory of her

arms, and by the sacrifices of every kind which her inhabitants have made to their country, should be in a manner forgotten in that branch of geography which treats of voyages and travels. Every country, every town of importance, even in the most remote regions, attracts crowds of curious and inquisitive persons, anxious to lay before the public descriptions as accurate as they are minute; while Poland, so distinguished for her hospitality, her toleration, and the friendly reception she affords to strangers whom political convulsions have driven from their native lands, and who fly to her for an asylum—Poland has found in the few travellers who have described her, enemies and calumniators instead of faithful delineators. Without reckoning those who, like Mr Neale, present in their indecent pictures a silly collection of absurd calumnies against the nation, and of revolting personalities against its inhabitants;—MM. Délicourt Mehé and Vautrin, whose disgraceful productions injure only their authors;—passing over the letters of M. Uklanski, whose style is embued with the gall of vengeance,—how many works upon Poland, published under different titles by MM. Malte-Brun, Georgel, Grafenaur, Guthrie, Pradt, &c., although of acknowledged merit, are defective in point of precision. The most recent book on this subject, and which is most chiefly resorted to by travellers, is a little

portable work, printed at Weimar in 1818, under the title of 'Guide des Voyageurs dans le Nord,' by M. Reinhard, counsellor of the Grand Duke of Saxe-Gotha, already well known by several excellent publications of this sort, descriptive of all the leading states and cities of Europe. This author passes an eulogium on the national character of the Poles, and does justice to their hospitality and other good qualities; but his descriptions, limited to a few pages, would have been more correct, if he had not trusted too implicitly to the veracity of the authors I have already mentioned, and if he had not followed the accounts of travellers, whose examinations of the country, to judge from Mr Reinhard's delineations, must have been made more than twenty years ago. In other respects the work is useful, and I have adopted it as my model in general in the following pages.

"Born in Poland, and possessing a topographical knowledge of my country, I have determined to give such an extent to this work as its object appeared to me to require. Writing for foreigners, in a language foreign to myself, I have endeavoured to unite in the work perspicuity with utility, and I shall be too happy if, while I have no other merit than that of being the first to present to the world an exact description of some provinces of my country, I shall be enabled to make myself useful to travellers, and to point out to strangers

whatever objects in Poland are most worthy to arrest their attention."

Our author then proceeds in his descriptive tour, commencing with Cracow, situated on a gentle ascent on the left bank of the Vistula, which divides it into three parts. The old town, Cracow, properly so called, the ancient capital of Poland, is one of these parts, Podgorze and Casimir are the other two, and there are beside suburbs in different directions. One part of the town of Casimir is inhabited by about 6000 Jews, who are excluded from the main or old town of Cracow, in which they are not even allowed to pass the night. The remains of antiquity which adorned the city have been in a great measure destroyed by the Austrians, whose barbarous policy it was to annihilate every monument which might remind the Poles of the renown of their ancestors. The *old town* was anciently fortified by a double circle of walls, and by towers remarkable for the variety of their forms; the gates were of Gothic architecture, and were very elegant; the Royal Castle or Citadel, *(Zamek,)* built in the early ages, and formerly the habitation of the kings of Poland, rises splendidly conspicuous, and commanding an extensive prospect, upon a rock called Wawel, in the heart of the city. But the Austrians totally overturned the ramparts, partly destroyed the gates, and converted the Castle into barracks. Many a tradi-

tion hovers around the Mount Wawel. A cave, which is still extant, is said to have formerly been the lair of a wonderful dragon, that spread devastation in the surrounding country.

The Cathedral, which is situated in the centre of this citadel, is an object of peculiar veneration to the Poles. "It is," says our author, "what the Capitol was to the ancient Romans, what the Pantheon is to France; in short, it is the precious receptacle for the mortal remains of their kings and their heroes, and it is not without a feeling of respectful veneration, mingled with religious awe, that one presumes to penetrate its ancient aisles, where one is surrounded by mausoleums, inscriptive tablets, statues, and chapels decorated with marble and bronze, and where one cannot advance a step without meeting with some monument of the renown of the country, of the valour and victories of heroes. There repose the venerable ashes of Boleslaus III. and IV. of Vladislaus Lokietek; of Casimir the Great; John Albert; Stephen Batory; Sigismund III.; Vladislaus IV.; John Casimir; Michel Wiszniowiecki; John Sobieski; and Frederick Augustus II."

In the Chapels of the Sigismunds are deposited the remains of St Stanislaus, the patron of the kingdom, and those of the heroic Kosciuszko and Poniatowski, which have been restored from foreign graves through the intervention of the Em-

peror Alexander, (King of Poland,) and are now deposited in the vault of King John Sobieski. Thus valour has joined heroes even in death. On the summit of the adjacent mount of St Bronislawa, a tumulus of the Carpathian marble has lately been raised to the memory of Kosciuszko.

Our author proceeds to enumerate and describe eight churches, (of which, he says, Cracow may boast of having the finest in Poland,) and other splendid and remarkable public buildings; the Academy, bearing the name of "Daughter of the Sorbonne," and possessing a library of 30,000 volumes, and 4000 rare MSS., as well as a cabinet of natural history, and an anatomical theatre; and the palaces of the nobility, which ornament the city. Among the last, the Episcopal Palace is particularly worth seeing. Its interior is decorated by historical paintings, and filled with Polish antiquities. It is the habitation of the Polish poet Woronicz, who is Bishop of Cracow. The "*Place*" is in the centre of the city. It was formerly the custom to erect a lofty throne in it on the day after the coronation of the kings, seated upon which they received the homage of the tributary princes. At Cracow there are two fairs every year, which are well frequented. In the whole territory there are only 100 national guards, (infantry,) 40 cavalry, and 200 civil officers. There is a good deal of commerce in grain.

In the neighbourhood many pleasing excursions may be made, particularly to the Salt Mines of Wieliczka, situated in Austria, a stage from Cracow. The chambers and passages in these mines, cut out of the pure and sparkling salt, are described as superb. The passages are dry, clean, and every where high enough for persons to walk upright. In some places, they open into large caverns, one of which is in the form of a capacious chapel, with an altar, ornaments, and two monks, apparently in the act of solemnizing a mass, and a statue of Augustus III., all cut out of the rock of salt, which is in enormous masses, white and red, and in general most beautifully crystallized. In one quarter of these mines flows a limpid stream unmixed by salt.

A second pleasure-trip may be made to the marvellous caverns of Czaiowice, lying in the midst of scenery worthy of melo-dramic imitation. In the next village, the traveller must provide himself with a guide to the thick and gloomy forest, interspersed with rocks and precipices. After half an hour's walk, there is a descent into a deep valley, through which a rapid stream rolls its foaming waters, and, at the declivity of a cliff, is the entrance into the caverns. The opening is narrow; but as soon as he has advanced a few steps, he finds himself in a large corridor, leading to a saloon, or spacious grotto, of up-

wards of fifty toises in diameter, and twelve in height. From thence, arched vaults conduct, in different directions, to other apartments of greater or less magnitude, so as to make the place a real subterraneous labyrinth, and dangerous to be visited without an intelligent guide. Having passed different contiguous caverns, the visitor arrives at last at the edge of a precipice, where he is stunned with the noise of a tumultuous torrent of ten toises in depth. The vaults of these grottos are dark and smoked, sparkling with stalactites at the light of torches. At every step one meets human bones, which, tradition says, are the remains of people who sought refuge there, at different times, from the scourge of war, and the ravages of the plague. In the vicinity is another curious cavern, Oycow, and picturesque ruins of a castle of the same name, once the habitation of Casimir the Great. At the distance of three English miles from the last is Piaskowa Skala, another romantic castle. Near it stands an extraordinary production of Nature, a rock resembling the Club of Hercules, seven toises in circumference at its base, and four times as much at its summit, towering into the air, and somewhat deviating from a perpendicular line.

We need not follow the author through the small towns on the road to Warsaw, but shall join him at that capital, which contains 99,000

souls, independent of the garrison, amounting to 20,000 more. It is now the capital of Poland; and has been, since the time of Sigismund III., the ordinary residence of her kings. It is situated on a considerable hill, on the left bank of the Vistula, and consists of an old and new town,—suburbs, (which are the most beautiful parts of the capital,) and four conterminous towns, having each their exclusive privileges, and their respective town-houses;—their names are Grzybow, Leszno, Szolec, and Praga. Praga, formerly of a large extent, was totally destroyed by Suwarow in the war of 1794. No less than 20,000 inhabitants, without distinction of sex and age, were butchered by the cruel soldiery. It was afterwards rebuilt; but, in the war of 1816, it was again partly pulled down to make room for fortifications, and a *tête de pont*. The present government is actively rebuilding it upon a beautiful and general plan. The Grand Duke Constantine has there a splendid palace, and usually represents, as deputy, the citizens of these suburbs in the General Diet. These, and such like generous proceedings, heal gradually the wounds formerly inflicted on the Poles. Praga is separated from Warsaw by the Vistula, and communicates with the capital by a flying bridge of 263 toises in length, which is speedily to give place to a more

permanent one in masonry and chain-work, after a model by Mr Metzel.

The castle, on a lofty and imposing situation, commands the Vistula and its opposite banks. It contains many superb and interesting apartments, adorned with pictures, marbles, and bronzes. The palaces and public buildings, to judge from the descriptions, and from the very neat prints with which this volume is adorned, are very magnificent. Chaste in their architecture, splendid in extent, and classical in their embellishments, they would honour any capital in the world; and yet one has never heard of Warsaw as distinguished for architectural beauty. In the midst of the large court of the Academy, a statue of Copernicus was by this time to be erected. The churches, the hospitals, and the schools, are numerous and handsome. Many of the streets, squares, and *places*, are spacious and beautiful, some of them ornamented by statues and pillars. Thorwaldson is employed on a bronze equestrian statue, in memory of Prince Joseph Poniatowski, to be placed in some one of the principal squares. There are some streets in the city, as in all places of antiquity, which are narrow, and the houses of which are very high; but improvements are daily made in these particulars.

Our author enumerates the merits of the different inns, coffee-houses, restaurateurs, &c. in every

place he describes, with all the zest of a connoisseur; and perhaps the capital may boast of many which are of the first order. We must, however, take all this *cum grano*, especially as to accommodations on the road; for we have been cautioned against believing the *bonnes auberges*, &c. of our author to mean what we call good inns in England. They do very well for the natives, who carry their beds and proper accommodations with them on their journeys,—as is the custom in other northern countries, as Prussia, Russia, and even some parts of Germany. In England, where the population is great, and where constant and frequent intercourse is kept up for the sake of business or pleasure, the encouragement to innkeepers is great, and the inns and their accommodations proportionably good. This is not the case in other northern climes, where the innkeeper does not feel it worth his while to risk any expence upon the accommodation of his employer. Indeed, our author himself observes, at p. 94, that although there is some improvement in the inns, "it is still almost indispensable for a foreigner travelling in Poland to take his bed along with him, which he could rarely omit with safety, even in the towns."

Several newspapers and literary magazines are published at Warsaw. There are many well stocked bookshops;—15 printing presses;—two

lithographic establishments;—and several engravers;—academies for designing after nature;—and an annual exhibition of paintings, which last year contained 180 works in painting and engraving;—a royal university, founded in 1816 by the Emperor Alexander:—an academy for the instruction of the deaf and dumb;—an academy of music;—a dramatic school;—and four schools on the Lancasterian plan;—a society of benevolence;—and a charitable institution;—a society of agriculture, and its practical school, in Marimont. Among the numerous manufactures of the place, it is remarkable that there are above 50 coach-making establishments,—in which branch there is a considerable export trade. In Warsaw there are 220 streets, and nearly 4000 houses—3000 of which are of masonry, covered with tiles, and the remainder are of wood. The wooden houses are gradually disappearing, and give room for new and splendid buildings in stone; and it is not now lawful to build in wood. The streets are paved with various sized stones, the inequality of which, although they are carefully repaired, renders them unpleasant to foot passengers. The city and its suburbs are lighted with *argand lamps*. The hackney coaches are of different descriptions, as Fiacres, Doroszki; and in winter the Traineaux, which drive with rapidity from

place to place at the moderate rate of a shilling an hour.

Twice a-year there is a fair at Warsaw, much frequented by merchants from different countries. St James' Day is the term of *contracts;* and Warsaw is then filled by people from the remotest provinces of Poland, who come to transact their business of purchases and sales of estates, and to arrange money matters between the capitalists and creditors. Similar contracts are yearly transacted in all the principal towns which formerly belonged to the kingdom of Poland, as Leopol, Wilna, Cracow, and Kiow. The principal ones are now in the last town. The usual public promenades in Warsaw are the garden of Saxe and of Krasinski, both occupying a considerable space within the city. The avenues of trees, conducting to Uiazdow, may rival in effect those of the Prater, near Vienna; and on Sundays and festivals are crowded with parties of people, who resort thither for recreation. At Uiazdow may be seen a well provided botanic garden. There are many fine country residences in the environs; but by far the most remarkable are *Lazienki*, the country seat of the last king, Stanislaus, adorned with numerous paintings of the first masters, and with marble busts of all the Polish kings,—and *Villanow*, formerly the country residence of John Sobieski, now a property of Count Potocki. The

palace is in the Italian style, and was entirely constructed by the captive Turks. It is surrounded by an extensive park; and there still exist several *Vistulean* poplars which were planted by the hand of John Sobieski. This sort of poplar is peculiar to Poland; and is called the Vistulean, from its being found in greatest profusion on the banks of the Vistula. Their huge trunks, standing at a distance from each other, rearing their summits high above the other trees of the forests, and spreading bold branches often bereft of leaf and bark by age, add much to the grandeur of the aspect of that vast river.

We shall extract one more description, and then take leave of that department. This passage is not from the pen of Krasinski, but is extracted by him from another work. It savours somewhat of the style of the Arabian Nights Entertainments; but our readers must judge for themselves. It is a description of *Arcadia*, a country seat of the Princess Radzivill, near Nieborow.

"It is to the exquisite taste of this lady that this place is indebted for its magnificence; all that Art and Nature have produced of rarity and price, in the most distant countries, are brought together here; and it seems as if they had contested for pre-eminence in the production of their treasures.

"You enter by a house having the appearance

of a Dutch farm; scarcely have you crossed the threshold of the door, which proves to be the entrance of a palace of crystal, when you believe yourself to be in an enchanted hall;—porphyry—bronze—mirrors—crystals, and marble, disposed with skill and taste, complete the illusion. On leaving this splendid apartment, you pass by a shady walk to a grotto, which you reach by steps contrived in the enormous masses of rock of which the grotto is formed. The grotto serves as an entrance to a building, whose appearance is that of a Gothic castle, adorned with armour and chivalric devices; and which seems to have been the residence of some preux chevalier of the olden time. Leaving this, you pass by an open arcade to a bold arch in the Grecian style, which serves as a frame to the charming landscape formed by the evergreen thickets which surround the temple. The gates of the temple are of precious materials, *(acajou,)* and are opened by a key of gold, enriched with diamonds. The vestibule is in the form of a rotunda, lighted by a cupola in the daytime, and by a Cupid, in a niche, bearing a torch, at night. On advancing, you are surprised to see the rotunda change into a suit of apartments. The first of these is a museum, containing every thing that is most curious—in cameos —Etruscan vases—fragments of inscriptions—bas reliefs—tripod candelabras, &c. The imposing as-

pect of the temple strikes you, on your entrance, with a sort of religious awe; and carries you, in imagination, back to the days of the oracles of old. The grandeur of the *vase* and of the cupola charms and seduces the eye, which reposes with delight upon those walls of white marble, adorned with Corinthian columns, and statues of Vestal virgins, guarding the sacred fire which burns upon the altar. The harmonious tones of an organ increase the charm; and, in the midst of the sweetest sensations that the soul can enjoy, you find yourself, as it were by enchantment, hurried out of the sanctuary;—suddenly your sight is plunged upon (plongée sur) a lake, through which a river forces its way, bearing along the foam occasioned by its recent fall, near the ruins of a handsome aqueduct, which serves as a bridge to enable you to make the tour of the lake, and to obtain a view of the façade of the temple.

"Following the flowery banks of this river, you reach an isle, where there is placed a monument of black marble, on which rests a figure of white marble, in the reposing attitude of the St Cecilia of Bernini at Rome,—which changes the interest of the inscription,—'*Et in Arcadia ego,*' to that inspired by the epitaph on the tomb,—'*J'ai fait Arcadie et j'y repose.*'

"Then you have the picturesque ruins of the ancient habitation of the god Pan; the sacrifice

to Esculapius, surrounded by his attributes; the isle of offerings, which you reach by a flying bridge, fixed to the banks by cordage. The circus, constructed on the Grecian model, and of the same size, is filled with monuments of marble, and of Oriental granite of the highest antiquity. A chapel, lately constructed at the gate leading from the park, and in the middle of a meadow enamelled with flowers, is above all remarkable. Its massive exterior gives it the majestic appearance of a sarcophagus. It is elevated on four arches, which serve as supports to it. It is ornamented in the interior by some copies in Sepia, of the works of the best painters, by Seydelman, an artist celebrated for the spirit and truth with which he gives the character of the painters after whom he designs. Among these, there is the Virgin, after Raphael,—Sacrifice of Emanuel, after Rembrandt,—Repose in Egypt, after Ferdinand Boll, —Magdalen, after Bottoni, and others.

"Delille has consecrated this spot, by his admirable description of it in his immortal poem, LES JARDINS. *

"But the most beautiful place in Poland, that has likewise been chaunted by Delille, is Pulawy, the ordinary country residence of Prince Czartoryski. Nature, art, taste, expence, all seem to have

* See Appendix, Note 12.

been combined to adorn it. It is situated on the prominent banks of the Vistula. The buildings are surrounded and shaded by an extensive park, or rather venerable grove, where, in a beautiful variety, are to be seen porticos and hermitages, Chinese kiosks, precipices, and subterraneous grottos. A colossal statue of the dying Clorinda, supported by Tancred, in white Carara marble; epitaphs hewn in rock for the deceased friends of that illustrious family. Yet it is not a place of beauty alone, but also of veneration. To it the natives resort as it were in pilgrimage, to gratify their patriotic feelings. There are two temples, the one built on the exact model of the Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli, the other of a Gothic structure. The first is destined to be the repository for the antiquities of Poland. It contains a great quantity of ancient Polish armour, shields, helmets, sabres, and is overhung with standards won by the Poles in the battles with the Turks, Austrians, and the Teutonic Order. At the walls stand the cenotaphs of conspicuous men of old, of eminent generals, poets, and philosophers; some with relics of bones, some empty,—all with appropriate emblems and mottos. On the cinereal urn of our ancient poet Kochanowski hangs a golden *lyre*. The cenotaph of Copernicus has the sublime inscription, *Sta Sol*. In a gloomy undervault of this temple, an obelisk of black Car-

pathian marble is raised to the memory of Prince Poniatowski, 'who lived for renown, and died for his country.'* The Emperor Alexander having visited this temple, adorned afterwards its copula, which was open, with a solid window-glass, made expressly for this purpose, through which now a dim and sombre daylight falls on the glorious remains of the ancient Poles.

"The other, or the Gothic Temple, contains chiefly the antiquities of the middle ages of all countries and nations. They consist for the most part of ancient tombstones, armour, rare books, manuscripts, and portraits. Among the last is to be seen the original portrait of Raphael, painted by himself, and Joan of Arc, by Carlo Dolci. This seat of the Prince Czartoryski is besides enriched with the largest library in Poland, containing about 120,000 volumes in different languages. It contains also the richest collection of MSS. particularly relating to the history of Poland."

Posting, we are informed, has reached the highest degree of perfection in Poland. The postilions are active, sober, intelligent, and trust-worthy. The horses, chiefly from the Ukraine and Russia, are indefatigable, strong, although small,

* An inscription on the *iron rings* which the Poles wear to his memory, and which cannot be rendered well in English. The original is, "*Zyl dla slawy, umarl za oyczyzne.*"

and full of fire and action. The celerity with which the traveller is conveyed from stage to stage is agreeable in many respects. Even on "postes doubles," he is not obliged, as in Germany, to kick his heels while the horses are baiting. The public carriages, which regularly travel on the great roads, are on the model of those in England. They travel night and day. At every post-house, (station de poste,) a register is kept, in which travellers are entitled to enter any complaints they may have to make of the post-boys, &c., whose deceptions, inattention, or impertinence, if established, are severely punished. The whole system is under the superintendence of a *direction generale des postes*. Those who do not wish to travel post, may find in every place *voituriers* in great numbers, among whom are many Jews, who will contract to convey them, at a small expence, distances of twenty or thirty miles, or farther, travelling at the rate of ten or twelve miles a-day. * When arrived at the end of the stipulated journey, the *voiturier* is sure to meet with a fare back again, and the traveller with the means of further conveyance. The probity of these voituriers is well established, and they may be safely entrusted with valuable effects, or money, to be conveyed to distant places. These advantages in

* The Polish mile is nearly six English miles.

travelling will be further increased by the rapid improvement of the roads, which proceeds with activity under the superintendence of government.

The forests are of great extent, particularly those in the north. Notwithstanding this, the roads are safe; and instances of robbery or murder are almost unheard of in Poland. This is partly owing to the natural good dispositions of the people, and partly to the watchfulness of the police. All vagabonds, male and female, both in the towns and provinces, are arrested by the police, and employed on public works.

The villages are of great length, and consist of thatched wooden houses. Those of the better order of peasants contain spacious and commodious apartments. Of late years, houses of stone are often met with. In many places there are as it were *colonies* of gentlemen farmers. They are the descendants and worthy rivals of those nobles who, under the name of *pospolité*, have given such proofs of devotion and fidelity to their native land, and from whom also the most celebrated individuals, and the most distinguished families, take their origin.

The richest inhabitants of the cities, as well as the nobles, have all their chateaus, or country-houses, with parks and gardens, which rival in beauty, and in the works of art which adorn them,

those of France and Germany. These mighty improvements are only the work of later years. While all other nations were making exertions to extend their commerce and their territory, to build new cities, and generally to improve and to beautify themselves, Poland, from its geographical position, (the bulwark of Germany,) was continually subject to the invasions of the Turks, the Tartars, the Swedes, the Cossacks, &c. Thus repose and tranquillity, so necessary for purposes of improvement, if obtained at all, were necessarily employed in repairing the ravages of war. But a few years of peace have shown that the spirit of improvement is not wanting, if the means are afforded.

The soil in general is fertile, and produces a great variety of different kinds of grain. Wine, bread, and coffee, are universally allowed to be of surpassing excellence. "If you want your coffee strong, ask for Polish coffee; if weak, call for German." Formerly, the Hungarian wines were consumed in great quantity, and they are still to be met with of ancient vintages at the tables of rich proprietors, and, above all, of ecclesiastics, who have kept them more than a century in their cellars. Of late years the French have introduced a taste for their own wines, which are now to be met with, in variety and good, in all the small towns and private houses. *English ale and por-*

ter are now a common beverage; and champagne, mixed with a profusion of seltzer water, is the usual cooling drink in the hottest season.

The peasantry, who are declared free by the constitutions of 1791, 1807, and 1815, though not very far advanced in civilization, are laborious, and abound in good qualities. They are devoted to their landlords, and are easily guided to improvement. Their stores, though not rich, supply them sufficiently with the necessities of life. Their welfare depends much upon their own industry. They are in general proprietors of portions of the soil allotted them by their landlord, *(Seigneur,)* who receives his rent in labour, the peasant working for him so many days in the week, called by the French *corvée;** this practice is restrained by

* A practice of this sort prevailed a few years ago, and perhaps still prevails, in Northumberland, where the cottagers were obliged to do *bondage* work, as they called it, for the landlord. The system of bondage work is universal wherever the people of Sclavonian origin have their settlements. It seems to have originated in necessity, as there is no other state of feudal subordination known, except that of certain peasants, who, instead of performing manual labour, go on messages when required by the landlord. These in Poland are designated by the name of Boyars, and are commonly in a better condition than the others. In some places there are whole villages inhabited by such boyars, who have probably acquired the advantageous privilege either from some signal conduct of valour in war, or from the private grant of their beneficent landlord.

laws preventing its abuse. Every peasant may quit his landlord if injured or dissatisfied. In some districts the peasants rise to be farmers, both hereditary and for terms of years; and it is hoped that the condition of this class will improve from day to day.

"The Jews, more numerous in Poland than in any other country, multiply every day, and already form a very important part of the population of the country.* Sober, economical, and industrious, they would have all the qualities essential in mercantile traffic, were their character free from the tarnish of craftiness, a want of good faith, and the trickery which they employ in their transactions. Having interest only for their guide, they are as yet far from meriting that consideration and confidence which is usually granted in commerce; and yet they have contrived to get possession of the principal share of the internal traffic, that great branch of national riches. They might thereby come to constitute one of the chief links of society, if their religion, their laws, and their customs, did not prescribe to them interests absolutely exclusive in their nature. It is this

* "There have in the last two years (1819, 1820) appeared many works dedicated to the improvement of this people. The councellor Müller, a literary character of distinction, promises a work on this subject, which is eagerly expected by the public."

absolute insulation, spiritual and personal, if I may so speak, that makes them a separate people in the very heart of Poland. Probably this is the source of that hatred and contempt with which they are treated, and which, instead of modifying by degrees all that is pernicious to society in their situation, only serves to concentrate them still more.* The Jews have hitherto proved a stumbling-block to our legislators, and nothing has been done by the present sovereign relative to them. He wishes to arm his prudence with experience. Their chief abuses, however, have been in some degree repressed by placing checks upon the manufacture and sale of spirits by the Jews, who made this traffic a terrible engine in the corruption and ruin of the peasantry, of whose property they thus obtained the disposal. They have also, in general, been ejected by the country gentlemen, from the inns which they formerly tenanted, which they kept in the state of desolation and discomfort we have already described, and which rendered it necessary to carry beds, kitchen uten-

* These observations apply to the Jews throughout the world; and, though charity would look forward with hope to an amendment as well of their faith and character, as of their condition in society, we behold with awe, in their present insulated, and, alas! detested situation, the accomplishment of prophecy, and the fulfilment of the curse which hangs over them.

sils, and provisions on every journey. In this state of things, (which is now in a great measure done away,) it is pleasing to know that the deficiencies of the inns were counterbalanced by the hospitality of the gentry, among whom the traveller was sought for, and met with that welcome and attention, that affability and politeness, which have ever characterized the nation of Poland."

We take leave of this little work by saying, that it is elegantly got up, both in typography and embellishments; that it is usefully and neatly put together, and that it contains ten times as much information as is generally to be found in such publications.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Note 1.

Kurhany are certain high *tumuli*, found extensively in Poland and Russia, in the form of graves, some twenty or even fifty feet high, and supposed to be the tombs of ancient renowned chiefs. Most of them are on hills like the cairns in Scotland, and often surrounded by a great number of others differing in size and height. Many of these are but little raised above the adjoining surface, others standing like giants single and solitary, objects of wonder to the traveller, and enigmas to the antiquary. The most conspicuous, and known by the names of the entombed characters, are the tomb of Cracus, a fabulous Polish Duke, the founder of Cracow, the tomb of Wanda, a Polish Princess, both near Cracow, and the tomb of Pelka near Iaroslaw in Gallicia. Upon the summit of a high mountain near Przemysl is a Kurhan to the memory of a chief whose name is unknown, and which tradition affirms to have been erected of earth heaped up by the helmets of his army. In other places are to be seen small dispersed hillocks containing sepulchral clay-

urns, large and small, filled with bones and ashes, also with corroded iron and copper implements, which had probably been employed for use or ornament by the departed during their lifetime. They seem to have been family burial-places. Such sepulchral urns are often turned up from the ground by the plough, and are called in Polish *Żale*, which means regrets.

Note 2.

Sclavonic is a corruption of the word Slavonic, by the insertion of *c*. The Sclavonians, as foreigners write and pronounce their name, call themselves in their own language Slawianie or Slowianie. Both terms are equally common, and both have an equally plausible etymology. *Slawianie* is derived from *Slawa*, fame or glory, which a people so extensive, and perhaps often victorious over others, did not, in their self-complacency, hesitate to bestow on themselves. *Slowianie*, again, might be derived from *Slowo*, "word," and then signifies a people that has words, that is, a common intelligible speech. The nations which did not speak their language were denied to have a language at all. In this predicament stand the Germans, whom the Poles and Russians do not call either Allemans or Teutons, but *Niemcy*, which signifies a nation that is dumb and has no speech.

Foreign authors commonly derive the name Sclavonian from the German word *slave*, serf, and from this etymology they then conclude on the slavish condition in which that nation for centuries lived,—an erroneous conclusion as well as derivation, still just as to the sub-

ject, as it is implied in it. Among the Sclavonians traces of patriarchal government prevailed long after they were entirely obliterated from amongst other European nations, and are not yet entirely effaced. The Sclavonians were originally governed by their Woiewods, leaders in war, whom they elected by votes from among themselves. For two different centuries twelve such Woiewods conjunctly governed in Poland. Hereditary government would, at that time, have been considered as unnatural and oppressive. The first steps towards aristocracy were made under the Princes *Kniaz*, *Xioze*, and *Hospodar*, who at first were not hereditary, but elected by the free suffrages of the people. Thus, Przemyslaw in Bohemia was raised to the princely dignity from the plough; Piast in Poland, from his rural hamlet, which his industry had filled with plenty, and which his hospitality opened to every stranger. The names of Czar and Krol (King in Poland) were not yet heard of. The last term some historians derive from Karol, by which the Sclavonians used to denominate Charlemagne during his invasions in their country. Under such government has there been the least room left for slavery and oppression? Certainly not, except in the etymological delusive dreams of those who are not acquainted with history. The feudal system, which in other countries changed men into serfs, having been adopted by some ambitious Sclavonian princes, in the succession of ages, has transplanted servitude into the Sclavonian countries. The Germans were the first propagators of this humiliating system. Having subdued several small Sclavonian tribes in Mecklenburg, in Lusatia, in Pomerania, and Austria, they changed them into their serfs,

—distorted the name of Slawianie or of Slawy into Slaven and Sclaven, and using those foreign tribes worse than their own native serfs, made at length the meaning of the word sclave, (Eng. slave,) opprobrious and degrading. Thus, the *slave* intended as an insult to the Sclavonians, (or as I would rather call Slavonians,) implies in its very derivation a complicated history teeming with human atrocities.

The language of the Sclavonian tribes, which is still spoken by 70 millions at least of the European population, seems to have been originally nearly the same in every place, more so than it is now. The more ancient the documents are, the more obvious is the similarity of its dialects. Ages having scattered the Sclavonian tribes in different directions, over different climates, introduced changes into their common language, and formed countless idioms in varied gradations, sometimes with an intermixture of words of a foreign stock. Still, however, with a little attention, a native can understand them and acquire them without difficulty. The leading Sclavonian dialects are the Russian, Polish, and Bohemian. I have here arranged them according to the comparative numbers of the people by whom they are respectively spoken. In regard to literature the Polish is the most extensive. The Polish idiom is also the richest and the most cultivated; the Russian is softer, the Bohemian harsher.

The fundamental principles of these three, as well as of the other Sclavonian dialects, are the same. None of them uses articles, in which they more resemble the Latin than the Greek; but in the manifold inflections which they admit before and after the nouns and

verbs, they outvie both. The construction is unconstrained, and as free as that of the Greek or Latin can be. The Sclavonic has three genders, for substantives, adjectives, and even for some tenses of verbs. The Polish nouns have no less than seven cases, both singular and plural. In ancient Polish we even find traces of a dual number. By a strange anomaly, the Polish places its accent on the penult, while the Russian places it on different syllables, frequently on the last, which makes it preferable for blank verse. This peculiarity of the Polish language, I conceive, is the work of the clergy, who formed the prosody of their native language on the model of the Latin prose. But I must, without making farther remarks upon this subject, refer the reader to the writings of grammarians. The Polish grammars for the use of the Germans by Bandtkie, Mrongovius, Vogel, Vater, and Bucki; Kopczynski's Polish Grammar for the French. The Russian grammars are Tappe's Theoretisch Practische Russische Sprachlehre, Heym's Russisches Lesebuch, Ludolphi Grammatica Russica, quae continet et Manuductionem quandam ad Grammaticam Sclavonicam, Oxoniae, 1696.

Note 3.

Notices of the Life of Copernicus.

Some modern authors, and particularly the French, misled by Montucla, make Germany the native country of Copernicus, which is a gross mistake, contradicted by all the evidences of geography and history:—Copernicus was a Pole. The error of supposing him to have

been a German seems to have arisen from his having been born in Prussia.

Thorn, his birth-place, is, indeed, a town of Prussia; but Prussia is not Germany, nor are all the Prussians Germans; and this was still less the case when we view them about half a century back. The greatest part of the kingdom of Prussia (I mean here only Western and Eastern Prussia) is peopled by the Poles, and by the Lithuanians, who are her aboriginal inhabitants; the inhabitants of the sea shore alone are of a German stock, these parts having been settled by Scandinavian pirates, augmented by the German settlers who came along with the Teutonic Order, with the intention of subjugating and overawing the seditious natives. Thorn is situated in that part of Prussia which has been from time immemorial, and is at present, inhabited by Poles. In the time of Copernicus, and until the second partition of Poland, (in the year 1792,) this constituted a Polish province, and was called Regal Prussia, in opposition to her eastern part, Ducal Prussia, which was a vassal country to Poland.

But there are additional facts which enable us to consider Copernicus not as a German but a Pole. His father was originally a Pole, a native of Cracow, who, in 1463, transferred his habitation to Thorn, which was as truly Polish as Cracow itself. In the tenth year of his residence in that town, that is in 1473, Nicolas Copernicus was born. Having received the first elements of learning at home, he was sent, in 1492, to the University of Cracow, celebrated at that time even abroad, and much frequented by foreigners from different nations and countries. His name is inscribed in the *Album* of

that university. The professor under whom he studied the Mathematical Sciences, to which he owed all his subsequent fame, was Albert Brudzewski, likewise a Pole: and his fellow-students were James of Kobylin, Bernard Wapowski, Nicolas Szadek, and Martin of Olkusz, all celebrated mathematicians, and authors in various departments of science. Wapowski is recorded to have been a particular friend of his, to whom he was wont to communicate his bold and original conceptions, and, in consulting him, set a high value on his approbation.

In the year 1497, Copernicus set out on his travels to Italy;—in Bononia we find him a companion in astronomical observations with Maria-Dominicus of Ferrara. From Bononia he went to Rome. In the twenty-seventh year of his age he was there appointed public Professor of Mathematics, and, according to the testimonies of his biographers, the celebrity of his lectures soon attracted a great number of students.

Besides the mathematical sciences he was also conversant with the medical; and, on his return from Rome to Poland, was graduated *Doctor Medicinæ* at Padua;—a ceremony which was attended with an unusual solemnity: as that honourable dignity was conferred upon him by the Bishop of Padua himself, in the Cathedral, in presence of the members of the Medical Faculty. His knowledge of medicine must have been great, and perhaps uncommon, as he has been styled by some learned Poles of that time the Æsculapius of the Polish physicians.

Upon his return to Poland, in the year 1507, his intention was to occupy a chair in the University of Cracow; and he seems to have staid there for five years;

for some of his astronomical observations made in that capital, and mentioned by himself in his own writings, are referred to the year 1509. His uncle, the Bishop of Warmia, drew him off from his scheme of remaining at Cracow, by offering him the advantageous office of Canon of Warmia, which Copernicus accepted.

Copernicus being now put in possession of emoluments adequate to insure an easy life, became entirely the votary of Urania; and reappears but twice on the busy scene of public life. In one of these instances we see him a *Deputy* to the Polish Diet, defending the rights of the people against the oppression of the Teutonic Order; and in the other, *valuing* the *money* vitiated by the avaricious abuses of the Grand-Master, and projecting means for stopping the disorders and grievances occasioned by it.

Thus far in evidence of Copernicus being a Pole, whom ignorance had made a German. It is undeniable that men of his genius belong equally to all countries, and as they are a common good, they ought also to be the common pride and ornament of the human race. Still, where any nation's peculiar property is concerned, as is the case here, *suum cuique tribuito.* To call Copernicus a German is equally improper as if we were to call Galileo a Dutchman, Newton an Italian, and Kepler a Turk; and yet this gross mistake is daily repeated by those with whom the authorities of Montucla and of Madame De Stael (who commits the same error in her 'Germany') are held immaculate criteria of truth.

In an excursion to Prussia, in 1819, passing through Thorn, I visited the house where Copernicus was born.

It is now inhabited by a citizen of that town, and, except its glorious humilities, has nothing striking in its appearance. The only thing that can attract the eye of a curious traveller, is a pillar in front of it about fourteen or fifteen feet high, with a globe placed on its top. I was shown into the room where he is supposed to have been born, which is narrow and gloomy, as houses of Gothic construction commonly are, and was ornamented by his portrait. In the lobby I saw a good number of other portraits, which I was told were the portraits of the proprietors of this house, from the father of Copernicus down to the present time. Simple, yet proud burghers, who thus contrived to perpetuate their mortal names by associating them with that of an immortal! On asking its present proprietor, my Cicerone, whether he intended to continue this long series by adding his portrait? He answered in the affirmative, and pointed out the place where he meant to hang it. The same citizen values this house so much, that, as I was told, he refused to sell it for a considerable sum to the Crown-Prince of Prussia, who, on visiting it, with the intention of honouring the memory of that great man, proposed to establish a school of mathematics there, and endow it liberally.

Except two portraits of Copernicus, the one in the church where he was baptized, and the other in the gymnasium, there exist no other monuments of him. During the time when Thorn belonged to the Duchy of Warsaw, the Poles had it in contemplation to erect a monument to his memory; but Thorn having been detached from Poland at the Congress of Vienna, the loss

of it frustrated their patriotic project, and the monument is now to be erected at Warsaw.

Copernicus made his observations without the assistance of telescopes, the invention of these being of a later date. Galileo, who improved them, was the first who applied them to astronomical purposes. It is astonishing what powers of mind the Polish philosopher must have possessed, being able to make such profound discoveries in astronomy by the mere strength of his intellect,—fathoming the depth of infinity with his bare eye, and with mere human sagacity detecting Nature at her divine work in her remotest and most hidden sanctuary.

Copernicus is recorded to have been the first European who set an instrument on the meridian. No regular observatories existed before him; the first that is known was erected at Cassel in 1561. * He made the greatest part of his astronomical observations at Frauenburgh, a Prussian town, situated at the shore of the Frisch-Haff. His Observatory is to be seen in the convent where he lived, which is built upon a mountain overlooking the town, and commanding a beautiful prospect of the environs, and the watery expanse of the frith. The room where he watched the evolutions of the heavens is square-shaped, containing only about six or seven yards in length, and constructed with bricks, without the application of any of the principles so strictly observed in the erection of more modern observatories. It is now entirely desolated, not even protected by windows. The room below, where he probably committed the results of

* See Encyclopædia Brit. Suppl. under the word OBSERVATORY.

his observations to writing, is inhabited by a Prussian officer of police.

He died in the same town in the year 1543, and was buried in the church, close on the right side of the high-altar. In the twenty-eighth year after his death, Cromer, Bishop of Warmia, the celebrated Polish historian, caused a tombstone to be erected to his memory. Two spheres were engraved upon it, and the following epitaph:

D. O. M.
R. D. Nicolao Copernico Torunensi
Artium et Medicinæ Doctori
Canonico Varmiensi
Præstanti Astrologo, et ejus Disciplinæ Instauratori
Martinus Cromerus Episc. Varmien:
Honoris, et ad posteritatem, memoriæ causa
Posui.
Anno Christi M. D. LXXXI.

Not the least trace of this inscription is now visible. His tomb being in the most frequented passage, it has been quite worn out by the footsteps of the pious passengers. His portrait is there seen suspended upon the pillar next his tomb. Broscius, a famous Polish mathematician, on his visit to that venerated spot, in the year 1618, celebrated Frauenburgh and the Observatory of Copernicus in his Latin epigrams.

The same Broscius presented a portrait of Copernicus to the University of Cracow; and Copernicus also gave a portrait of his father, which he himself had painted; both which curious monuments are preserved in the library of the university.

John Sniadecki, Astronomer at the University of Wilna, wrote the biography of Copernicus, and an ana-

lysis of all his astronomical works, which has been inserted in the Annals of the Society of the Friends of Science at Warsaw. It is translated into French and German. The German translation is, if I mistake not, published in the Astronomical Ephemerides at Berlin.

Note 4.

Vitellio (Ciolek) lived in the beginning of the 13th century, and was the first in Europe who investigated the *Theory of Light*, having elucidated its principles long before Newton. Montucla, and Brisson, in his Dictionnaire de Physique, Art. Optique, relates it as a certain fact;—they only deny that system to be originally of his invention by ascribing it to Al-Hasen, a learned Arab of the 12th century. Broscius, a Polish mathematician of the 17th century, appears to have been of a different opinion. In his treatise De Dierum Inequalitate, he quotes Vitellio's authority separately from that of Al-Hasen, as if there were no connection betwixt their writings. Riesner, publishing a new edition of Vitellio's Optics, in the 16th century, ascribes to him the original illustration of the Theory of Optics. Whether our Vitellio drew any advantage from the Arabian MSS. of Al-Hasen, or not, it would be difficult to ascertain. Still this must remain indisputably true, that he was the first in Europe who wrote on this subject, and made it universally known.

Gregory of Sanok, philosopher and poet, lived in the first half of the 18th century; and, as the historian Callimachus, his contemporary, attests, was the reformer

of taste in the Polish literature.—" Primus itaque sordem et squalorem," says he, " quem recentiores grammatici discentium ingeniis offuderant detergere orsus, cultum, ac splendorem antiquæ orationis Cracoviam induxit. Circa rhetoricam et poësin, cui naturaliter affectur erat ingenium continuerat. Carterum ille mox novam de se admirationem apud omnes excitavit; coepit enim Bucolicon carmen Virgilii publicitus interpretari, cujus et nomen et author ad eam diem, extra omnem notitiam ea in regione fuerat. Tacito itaque consensu novitas rei ad eum audiendum homines attraxit, ut nemo fuerit, qui non literas nosset, qui non ad ipsius auditorium conveniret. Una erat vox inter omnes literatos, tunc proximum eis lumen illuxisse cujus beneficiis ad verum iter doctrinæ progrederentur, cum antea deviis erroribus impliciti citius consenescerent, quam ad laborum suorum fructum aliquem discendo pervenirent."

We find him, in the year 1440, councillor to Vladislaus, a Polish prince of royal blood, when crowned King of Hungary;—he was also his companion in the war carried on against the Turks in 1444. He wrote the history of this expedition, and, besides, was the author of some pieces of poetry. But none of his writings survived—only his opinions, and some witty sayings, are related in the works of his admirers, and particularly those of Callimachus. He is, for instance, reported to have styled the scholastic subtleties of Aristotle " *somnia vigilantium;*" and maintained, that the education of youth should begin with poetry and orators;—that the more religion is wrapt in a veil of mystery, the more will people revere it, for, a familiar look is a profanation of holiness;—that to benefit, or to save the

country, there was more strength in the mind than in the body. He compared an ungrateful person to the sea, which, though it receives sweet water from all rivers, does not change its nauseous nature. He advised one, who, in a large company, praised the beauty of his wife, to be silent.—"For," said he, "if you really convince them, you shall soon repent your having married a beauty." But we must have done with his sayings, which are profound, and pronounced with an epigrammatic sharpness. To judge from what he said, or rather what is said of him, he appears to have been a man superior to the prejudices of his contemporaries. He was threatened by the Pope with incarceration for his opinions. We find him, in a later period of his life, raised to the dignity of Archbishop of Leopol.

Zaluzanski, a celebrated botanist of the 17th century, was the first who detected the sexual fructification of plants, having anticipated Linnæus, to whom it is commonly ascribed. His book, in which he elucidates the new system of botany, was published at Prague; and Linnæus must, or at least might, have known it.—See Essai sur la Literature de Pologne, par M. Dubois, Membre de l'Academie de Sciences, Arts, et Belles-Lettres. Edition de Berlin, 1778, p. 389.

Mathias Casimir Sarbiewski was born of a noble family in the palatinate of Plotzko. Having become member of the Order of Jesuits, he travelled for some time in foreign countries. During his stay at Rome, he addressed several of his Latin Odes to Cardinal Berberini, his particular friend, and assisted Pope Urban VIII. in the reform of the liturgy of the Catholic Church. He afterwards was elected poet laureate, which honour

was the more creditable to his talents as it was bestowed on him by a person who was no mean poet himself. On his departure from Rome, his Holiness, in the act of bestowing upon him his benediction, hung around his neck a precious chain, along with his own miniature, while Sarbiewski was kneeling before him. When Sarbiewski, crossing the Carpathian mountains, where he was surrounded by the wonders of Nature, first came in sight of his native land, from their highest range, his feelings burst into a sublime and religious ode, which begins thus,—

"Aeterna magnis carmina Carpati
Inscribo saxis. Discite posteri,
Castisque discendum puellis
Et pueris geminate cantum." etc.

On his arrival at the place of his nativity, he apostrophized, in lines which follow, the fountain *Sona*, situated in his paternal estate, at which he used to spend the playful hours of his youth, sometimes by the side of his aged grandfather, who died at the patriarchal age of 109 years.

Fons innocenti lucidus magis vitro
Puràque purior niue,
Pagi voluptas, vna Nympharum sitis,
Ocelle natalis soli,
Longis viarum languidus laboribus
Et mole curarum grauis
Thuscis ab vsque gentibus redux, tibi
Accline prosterno latus:
Sic dum loquaci prata garritu secas,
Et lætus audiri salis;
Assibilantes populetorum comæ
Ingrata ponant murmura
Tibi, lyraeque Vatis. etc.

At Wilna he was graduated doctor in the presence of King Vladislaus IV. who, during the ceremony, pulled off a ring from his finger, and presented it to our poet with a gracious compliment to his genius. Shortly after we find him occupying for some time the chair of poetry at the university, and at last chaplain to the king. He died at Warsaw in 1640, in the 45th year of his age. His poetical works are five books of Lyrics—Silviludia—the Lechiad, an unfinished epic poem—and epigrams. One on the statue of Cicero runs thus:—

"Ora Myron, humeros Lysippus, lumina finxit
Praxiteles; vocem fingere nemo potest."

His prose writings are, De Acuto et Arguto—De Perfecta Poësi—De Diis Gentium.

His fame as a poet spread over all Europe. Grotius preferred reading his poetry to that of Horace. The most celebrated men of different nations addressed verses to him, expressing their admiration of his muse. These are usually annexed to his poems with the title of Epicitharisma. Out of their great number, I shall only quote one written by Erycius Puteanus.

Qvis Mysta Apollinis nouus? quis proximo
Accedit Vrbanvm gradu
Threïssa doctæ fila carpens barbiti,
Et Pindari ciens melos?
Romanus ore, natione Sarmata,
Cultissimi vir ingeni,
Ab axe flammam frigido Sarbievivs,
A nocte lumen inuehens,
Vertit quadrigas orbitâ Phœbi nouâ
Niuesque mundi calfacit.
Aut sæcla barbaram exuunt æruginem,
Aut prisca redeunt sæcula. etc.

Bzovius, (Bzowski,) born in 1567, was a pupil of the university of Cracow. He spent several years in travelling; and, during his residence at Milan, lectured publicly on philosophy. Vitellio, in his Chrysol., gives the following account of the celebrity which he acquired in Italy:—"Erecti exterorum animi ob eximium hominis ingenuosi acumen, cum sibi ambitiose deposcere, Polonum negare, tam horrendo et extreme ut putant damnato in solo, eam ingenii fœcunditatem, industriæ sagacitatem potuisse exoriri non verisimile arbitrantur. Sed cum ventosa hominum illorum ad retinendum palpatione se non potuisse deliniri palam significaret ne comusculis illis pasci magnum quid existimarent, rediit in patriam fama adventum suum celebri antevertente." On his return to Poland, he occupied, for some time, the chair of theology at Cracow; and, after the death of Baronius, was destined, by the Pope, to continue his Ecclesiastical History. His continuation is published in 21 volumes. "Ea (annalium volumina) et operis mole et rerum numero ac varietate et laboris magnitudine cœteris (operibus Bzovii) præstare dicenda sunt, quæ incredibile memoratu est, quanta animi alacritate susceperit, quantaque celeritate ad absolutionem et perfectionem perduxerit, præsertim cum non parum multi ab excessu Baronii assiduo opere eandem incudem dies noctesque tutunderint, neque adhuc quicquam in hoc genere quod magnopere probares, attulerint."—*Joannis Nicii Erithræi* Pinacotheca imaginum illustrium virorum, Col. Agr. 1743, p. 198.

Stanislaus Hosius was a man of low birth, who owed his elevation to his talents alone. He was successively made Bishop of Warmia, Cardinal and Legate of the Pope, and President of the famous Council of Trent in

1562. To him the Jesuits are indebted for their introduction into Poland. He established them at first in Braunsberg, a Prussian town; from thence they spread over Lithuania, and other Polish provinces.

Note 5.

Warsavia Physice Illustrata ab Erndtelio Dresdæ, 1730, p. 4, contains this favourable account of the character of the Polish nation:

"Invitabat non minus ad hæc institutum, (meaning his work,) ipsa nationis Sarmaticæ dignitas et erga exteros bene merentes summa humanitas et benevolentia, quibuscum hospitalitatis virtute junctis, plerasque superant, fatente ipsa invidia, cultiores etiam gentes, generosi Poloni. Neque temere credas velim quarundum blateronum scurrili maledicentiæ, qui gentem hanc nobilissimam de nescio qua feritate et asperitate suspectam reddere satagunt. Poloni sane urbaniores et cultu elegantiores sunt, quam vulgo creditur. Et ne temere vel ex intempestiva adulatione hoc dictum putes, loquatur pro me eloquentissimus M. A. Muretus, qui, (a. Ch. 1578,) aureo plane ore et Ciceroniano stylo, Polonorum dignitatem sequentibus commendat. "Magna mihi cum multis Germanis, magna cum permultis Polonis familiaritas, magnus usus, et magna necessitudo fuit. Semper eos expertus sum bonos viros, apertos, humanissimos, præterea et prope omnes eo vitæ cultu et munditie, quæ ad elegantiam potius, quam ad ullam barbariem accederet. Nugæ istæ sunt hominum, eos, qui adulari et fallere, et aliud loqui, aliud

cogitare nesciunt, barbaros vocantium. Utinam nos eo modo barbari essemus! Utri vero barbariores, sunt, nati in media Italia, quorum vix centesimum quemque reperias, qui Latine aut Graece loqui sciat, aut literas amet; an Germani et Poloni quorum permulti et earum linguarum utramque perfectissime callent, et ita litteras ac liberales disciplinas amant, ut in eis tempus omne consumant? Olim illi fortassis asperi ac barbari fuerunt; hoc quidem seculo vereor, ne ad nos barbaries, ad illos cultus et splendor vitæ, et eruditio atque humanitas, mutatis sedibus, commigrarit. Nec frustra Erasmum Roterdamum, acerrimum alias vitiorum Aristarchum, asseruisse alicubi in scriptis suis puto. 'Litteris, legibus, moribus, et religione, et si quid est, quod a barbariei probro vindicet, cum præcipuis, et lautissimis nationibus certare posse Polonos;' allegante 'autore Poloniæ Defensæ contra Barclaium.'"

Note 6.

Josephus Struthius, a famous physician, was born in Posnania, in 1510. He studied Greek at Cracow under Libanius—natural philosophy under Morawski—medicine under Cyprianus of Lowicz. In his youth he enjoyed the patronage of two noble families, Laski and Choinski. During his travels he continued his medical studies, applying himself assiduously to the perusal of the works of Hippocrates and Galenus. During his stay at Padua, the Senate of Venice created him a public professor of medicine at that place. He rescued from oblivion the study of the *pulse*, (sphygmica,) neglected

since the 12th century; and, having made it an object of his lectures, promoted its divulgation throughout Europe. He was physician to the Polish King, Sigismund Augustus, and died, in 1568, in Posnania, where his epitaph is still extant. His works are very numerous. I shall quote only the principal ones, containing some historical information: In Luciani Samosatensis Astrologiam Commentariorum libri duo, Crac. 1531,—Galeni Astrologia ad Aphrodisium exhibens Mathemathicæ Scientiæ Prognostica de Decubitu Infirmorum, nunc primum a Jos. Struthio e Graeco translata, Venetiis, 1535,—Galeni de Urinis Liber e Graeco traductus, Venetiis, 1535,—Galeni de Antidotis libri duo, per tot secula ab omnibus magnopere desiderati, e Graeco in Latinum traducti et commentariis illustrati a Jos. Struthio, Polono, Venetiis, 1537,—Artis Sphygmicæ, jam mille ducentos annos perditæ et desideratæ, libri V. a Jos. Struthio, Venetiis, 1573. This work has passed through three editions. He edited also the writings of Hippocrates, De Fracturis and De Articulis.

Note 7.

Among the authors who gave accounts of the University of Cracow, are Pistorius in his Corpus Historicorum Poloniae, Vol. III. Basileae, 1582.—Aeneas Silvius Piccolomineus, afterwards Pope, under the name of Pius II. in his Relatio de Polonia.—Hartmanus Schedel in his Commentarius de Sarmatia.—Ludovicus Decius in his Vetustates Polonorum.—Jacobus Middendorp in his Treatise "De Academiis Orbis Universi, a. 1594."—Leonard Cox, an Englishman, "De Laudibus Acade-

miae Crac. 1512," who, at the proposal of Erasmus of Rotterdam, accepted a chair of rhetoric in Cracow.— Among the Polish authors, Miechovita, Dlugossus, Cromerus, Orzechowski, in their Chronicles *passim*. But the principal works concerning it *are*, Radiminski's " Fasti Studii Generalis Acad. Crac. an. 1658," in seven volumes, and his " Annales Almæ Acad. Crac." in MS ;— and Soltykowicz's " State of the University of Cracow," in 1810.

Note 8.

Radiminski, giving biographical notices of the celebrated natives who were pupils of the University of Cracow, passes over the foreigners who had there received their education in these words : " Nam omnium gentium illustres virtuti et scripsit viros, Italos, Danos, Germanos, Dalmatas, Boëmos, Silesios, Pannonas, qui ex hac Academia nostra prodierunt referre, nec virium est nec ingenii nostri." In this enumeration the Swedes are omitted ; let us at least advert to them. They had in Cracow their separate bursary for several students ; and the most eminent Swedes educated there were, Olaus Laurentii, called also de Upsalia, graduated Doctor Theol. at Cracow in 1416, and subsequently Archbishop of Upsal ; Olaus and John Magnus, about the year 1500 ; the first studied philosophy and theology, the other mathematics ; both graduated Doctores Theol. and afterwards, one after the other, Archbishops of Upsal. They are celebrated as historians of Sweden ; and both died in exile, on account of their attachment to

the Romish Church during the time of the Reformation.

Note 9.

Mathias of Cracow lived at the close of the 14th century, was professor at three universities, those of Cracow, Prague, and Paris; finally a Theologian to the Emperor Rupert, and, in the year 1402, his Ambassador to the Khan Tamerlane. His writings are theological; some were directed against the heresies of Wickliff. "Theologia," arranged in a scholastic manner, "Usus Eucharistiæ," and "Ars Moriendi," are his principal works. This last was thought so important, that, in order to promulgate it the sooner, it was, in 1440, printed with xylotypes at Harlem, and hence belongs to the incunabula of the art of printing.

Note 10.

Albert Brudzewski was born in 1445, educated at Cracow, and at last Professor at the University of that place. He was the pupil of Michael of Wroclaw in the physical sciences, and of John of Glogow in mathematics, —fellow-student of Eckius and Rudolph Agricola, both foreigners, and famous poets, crowned in Rome. At a later period, Brudzewski was secretary to Alexander, a prince of royal blood; and in this quality he died in 1497. His works are, Introductorium Astronomorum Cracoviensium; — Tabulæ resolutæ Astronomicæ pro supputandis motibus corporum cœlestium;—De Constructione Astrolabii. Since his time the mathematics have continued to flourish in Poland. His pupils were so

many, that he might be considered as the founder of a *school* of mathematicians. Copernicus stands at their head. Among the others are James of Kobylin, the author of "Declaratio Astrolabii;"—Bernard Wapowski, a famous historian, and a particular friend of Copernicus;—Nicolas Szadek, Commentator on Aristotle's Ethics, and author of different theological works;—Martin of Olkusz, author of "Nova Calendarii Romani Reformatio, 1516," an undertaking which he had been entrusted with by Leo X. After a strict examination his reform was found well adapted to the purpose; but, unfortunately for his fame, the death of this Pontiff prevented the adoption of it. The Reform of the Calendar, realized sixty-four years after his death, under Gregory XIII. is not in any thing different from his computations. Mr Soltykowicz having made a comparison of the two, has pointed out their close mutual coincidence.—Grzebski, the first translator of Euclid's Elements into Polish, belongs to the same school, though he was not his immediate pupil. The same may be said of Broscius, who was born in the year 1581, and concludes the series of the celebrated mathematicians of this ancient seminary. After him mathematics were neglected until the reign of Stanislaus Poniatowski. Broscius was author of the following writings: Geodesia Distantiarum sine Instrumento;—Polybii locus obscurior Geometrice explicatus, Crac. 1610;—Dissertatio de Cometa Astrophili, Crac. 1619;—Quæstio de Dierum Inequalitate, Crac. 1619;—Arithmetica Integrorum;—Apologia pro Aristotele et Euclide contra Petrum Ramum et alios, Dantisci, 1652;—De Numeris Perfectis.

Note 11.

The Lectures on Rhetoric in the University of Cracow were founded on Humanity and Dialectics; and the lecturers were also called Professors of Philosophy. The most eminent are the following:

James Gorski, born in 1525, Doctor utriusque juris. His principal writings are these: De Periodis atque Numeris, libri duo, Crac. 1558;—De Generibus dicendi Liber, Crac. 1559;—De Figuris tum Grammaticis tum Rhetoricis, Libri V. Crac. 1560;—Commentariorum Artis Dialecticæ, Libri X. Crac. 1563;—Orationes Gratulatoriæ, Crac. 1582.

Benedict Herberst, an opponent of Gorski, delivered Lectures on the Orationes and Epistolæ of Cicero, and published several of them with his remarks. His original works are, Vita Ciceronis,—Disputatio de Periodis et Ratione scribendæ Orationis,—De Ratione instituendæ Juventutis,—Tabulæ in Prosodiam,—Arithmetica Linearis.

Simon Marycki translated into Latin, and edited "Demonsthenis de Pace Oratio," in 1546; and "Demosthenis pro Libertate Rhodiorum," in 1547, Crac.—published also Cicero's "Oratio pro Publ. Quintio," in 1547,—and "Dialogi tres de Oratore," in 1548, Crac., both accompanied with explanatory notes. He wrote besides "De Scholis seu Academiis," Libri II. Crac. 1551.

Adam Romer, Doctor Philos. is author of the following works on the subject of eloquence: De Ratione recte eleganterque scribendi ac loquendi, Libri III

Crac. 1590,—De informando Oratore, Libri III.—Analysis and illustrations of ten Speeches of Cicero.

Burski, Doctor Philos. Prof. of Eloquence in the Academy of Zamosc, in 1600. His principal work, which was much admired at that time, is "Dialectica Ciceronis quæ disperse in Scriptis reliquit, cum Commentariis. Samosci, 1604."

Lepiecki closes the series of the eminent scholastic teachers of eloquence. His published works were twenty in number, which I shall not enumerate. In all of them may be seen a great deal of erudition, and much display of talent; but likewise evident traces of a corrupted taste which began to insinuate itself into learning, and of which the Poles were unable to free themselves, until the period of the national reform of education.

Note 12.

Description of Arcadia and Pulawy, by L'Abbé Delille. See "Les Jardins," Chant I.

Sous un ciel moins heureux, le Sarmate, à son tour,
Présente, aux yeux ravis, plus d'un riant séjour.
Tel brille ce superbe et riche paysage
Qui fut de Radzivil l'ingénieux ouvrage:
Là, tout plaît à nos yeux, le coteau, le vallon,
Et la belle *Arcadie* a mérité son nom.
Et pourrois-je oublier ta pompe enchanteresse,
Toi, dans qui l'élégance est jointe à la richesse,
Fortuné *Pulhavi*, qui seul obtins des dieux
Les charmes que le ciel partage à d'autres lieux?
Quel tableau ravissant présentent tes campagnes!
De quel cadre pompeux l'entourent ces montagnes,
Où du grand Casimir, seul, sans garde et sans cour,
Le palais règne encor sur les champs d'alentour!

Détours mystérieux, magnifiques allées,
Bois charmans, verds coteaux, agréeables vallées,
Les aspects étrangers, et tes propres trésors,
Tout enchante au dedans, tout invite au dehors.
Dirai-je les forêts dont tes montes se couronnent,
Où ce chêne, géant des bois qui l'environnent,
Où ce beau peuplier de qui l'énorme tronc,
Lorsque de cent hivers il a bravé l'affront,
Se festonnant de nœuds, d'où sort un verd feuillage,
Semble orné par le tems, et rajeuni par l'age ?
Pour mieux charmer les yeux, au pied de tes coteaux,
La Vistule, pour toi, roule ses vastes eaux ;
Pour toi son sein blanchit sous des barques agiles,
Elle baigne tes bois, elle embrasse tes îles.
Quel plaisir, quand le soir jette ses derniers feux,
De voir, peints à la fois dans ses flots radieux
Qu'un beau pourpre colore, et qu'un blanc pur argente,
Le soleil expirant et la lune naissante !
Là, d'un chemin public, c'est l'aspect animé,
Du plus loin qu'il te voit le voyageur charmé
S'arrête, admire, et part, emportant ton image ;
Le fleuve, le ruisseau, la forêt, le bocage,
Les arcs lointains des ponts, la flèche des clochers
Me frappent tour à tour ; tes grottes, tes rochers
Sont de vastes palais voutés par la nature ;
D'autres, enfans de l'art, ont chacun leure parure.
Là, les fleurs, l'oranger, les myrtes toujours verds
Jouissent du printems, et trompent les hivers ;
D'un portique pompeux leur abri se décore,
Et leur parfum trahit la retraite de Flore.
Ailleurs, c'est un musée, asile studieux.
Livres, bronzes, tableaux, là, tout charme les yeux ;
Là, même après Mérope, Athalie et Zaïre,
Mes foibles vers, peut-être, obtiennent un sourire.
Rome, Athène, en ces lieux, quel art vous imita ?
Je reconnois de loin le temple de Vesta.
Voici la roche auguste où tonnoit la Sybile ;
Sa main n'y trace plus sur la feuille mobile

Ces arrêts fugitifs, tableaux de l'avenir ;
Ici, c'est le passé qui parle au souvenir.
Ses nombreux monumens enrichissent l'histoire,
Et ce temple est pour nous le temple de mémoire ;
J'y trouve le bon roi, l'usurpateur cruel,
Et les traits de Henri près de ceux de Cromwell,
La chaîne de Stuart, ce livre d'Antoinette,
Par qui montoit vers Dieu sa prière secrète.
Ah ! couple unfortuné, sujet de tant de pleurs,
Vos noms seuls prononcés attendrissent les cœurs.
Au sortir de ce temple où revivent les ages,
Un autre va des lieux me montrer les images ;
Imagination, pouvoir que j'ai chanté,
Conduis-moi, porte-moi dans ce temple enchanté
Où des murs Byzantins, d'un temple où le Druide
Souilloit de sang humain son autel homicide,
D'un palais de l'Ecosse, et d'un fort de Paris,
S'assemblent les fragmens, l'un de l'autre surpris.
Rome, Rome elle-même, en ravages féconde,
Mêle ici sa ruine aux ruines du monde ;
Un roc du Capitole y venge l' univers ;
Mais un temple est formé de ces débris divers ;
Il peint le monde entier, il orne le bocage ;
Et le tems destructeur méconnoît son ouvrage.
Au fond de ce bosquet, vers ce lieu retiré,
J'avance et je découvre un débri plus sacré ;
Venez ici, vous tous, dont l'âme recueillie
Vit des tristes plaisirs de la mélancolie.
Voyez ce mausolée où le bouleau pliant,
Lugubre imitateur du saule d'Orient,
Avec ses longs rameaux, et sa feuille qui tombe,
Triste, et les bras pendans, vient pleurer sur la tombe.
Et toi dont le génie orna ce leu charmant,
Que ce lieu, pour toi-même, est un doux monument !
Il te vit, fille heureuse, adorer un bon père,
Te vit heureuse épouse, et bienheureuse mère.
Ta fille, à ces beautés, prête un charme nouveau ;
Elle embellit les fleurs, le bosquet, le ruisseau,

Te rend plus chers les bois chéris de tes ancêtres.
Là, vos plus doux plaisirs sont des plaisirs champêtres ;
Là, communs sont vos vœux, votre bonheur commun,
Vos parc sont séparés, et vos cœurs ne sont qu'un.
Et moi, peintre des champs, moi qui ferai, peut-être
Vivre ces beaux jardins que vos mains ont fait naître,
Mon nom du moins, mon nom habite donc ces lieux !
La pierre qui l'honore est donc chère à vos yeux !
Des groupes de bergers et des chœurs de bergères
Viennent donc quelquefois, de leurs danses légères,
Animer la prairie où gît modestement,
Au bord d'un clair ruisseau, mon humble monument !
Ah ! que ne peut ma voix s'y faire un jour entendre !
Mes chants vous rendroient grâce, et pour une âme tendre,
Quels sons harmonieux quels accords ravissans,
De la reconnoissance égaleut les accens ?
Entendez donc sa voix ; et que son doux langage
Pour moi soit un plaisir, et pour vous un hommage.

THE END.

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SPECIMENS OF MUSIC.

(See page 54 and 233.)

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